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A  
BRIEF HISTORY  
of  
St.  
SAINT JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF  
ABBOTTSTOWN, PA.

by  
WILLIS W. EISENHART

SAINT JOHN EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

ABBOTTSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

1960

SUBMITTED BY ARTHUR McELROY  
3105 W. 39th PLACE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
DESCENDANT OF THE McELROY, GEISELMAN & ICKES FAMILIES





# A BRIEF HISTORY

of

**1940-1950**



## SAINT JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*of*

ABBOTTSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

*by*

WILLIS W. EISENHART







PASTOR



*Rev. Lester J. Karschner, S.T.M.*



## THE AUTHOR

The inclusion of this page is at the insistence of the leaders of St. John Church. The author has always succeeded in focusing attention—not upon himself—but upon his subject. We feel, however, that the reader will have a greater appreciation of this book, if he knows something about the author.

Willis W. Eisenhart, now in his eighty-second year, is first and foremost a Christian gentleman, possessing in abundant measure those virtues commonly associated with Jesus of Nazareth. Retiring in nature, he nevertheless possesses a deep and thorough understanding of the currents which make up our educational, social and religious life.

He is a scholar of the first order, adding to his extensive formal education, a wealth of reading and a keen observation of human nature. Spending most of his life as a school administrator, he still had time to serve in various capacities in the Church and community enterprises. He has given generously of his strength and resources, not only to the local congregation, but also to various boards and agencies of the United Lutheran Church.

In the author there is combined a keen memory plus a burning desire to obtain the very highest degree of accuracy from existing records. The Church is most grateful that he has donated his time and effort so lavishly in the production of our history. This is the most recent of countless acts of service he has rendered to his Church throughout his long and self-sacrificing career.

REV. L. J. KARSCHNER, *Pastor*

September 1959.





## FOREWORD

This is a brief history of the origin, the growth, and the functioning of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Abbottstown, Pennsylvania. It was prepared for distribution in connection with the two hundredth anniversary of the local church. Its purpose is to provide 1) information about persons who served the church in one way or another during their lifetimes, 2) pertinent facts about the property belonging to the church, and 3) significant details about the developing program of the local church.

The narrative is brief because the records are comparatively few. Extant record books of St. John Church, together with synodical and conference records of the Lutheran Church, were the chief sources of information. Sometimes it was difficult to interpret the meaning of statements made; however, it is believed that conclusions reached are trustworthy, at least insofar as the original records are accurate statements of fact. It is hoped that members and friends of St. John will find the history a convenient source of information about the Abbottstown Lutheran Church.

The writer acknowledges with gratitude the cooperation of St. John church officials for making church records available for study. He is deeply appreciative, also, of the courtesy and helpfulness of officials of the Gettysburg Seminary Library for the privilege of examining early records pertaining to the functioning of the Lutheran Church in America. Finally, he is thankful to many friends interested in St. John church history for supplying information not found in local church records.





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## EARLY HISTORY

The presence of Lutherans within the political division of Lancaster County, which later became Berwick Township, York County, antedated by a decade or more, the first authentic record of the existence of a Lutheran Congregation in Abbottstown. This statement is attested 1) by the names of many early settlers living within the town community, whose European ancestors are known to have belonged to the Lutheran Church, and 2) by the records of itinerant Lutheran ministers who visited Lutheran families, now and then, to minister to them in matters spiritual.

Exactly when Berwick Lutherans organized a congregation, is not known. There are two records, however, that prove its existence prior to the year 1770. The older record is a deed, dated June 4, 1770, which conveys the lots now marking the sites of the Old Dutch Cemetery and the present church building, to the Congregation of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of the town of Berwick. The grantors of the deed were John Abbott and his wife, Alice. The deed is kept in the Church Safe in the Parsonage.

The other record is found in a book, the title page of which reads, "This book was given by Captain Nicholas Bittinger as a present to the use of the Lutheran Church and Congregation at Abbottstown this 16th of August, 1784." The book is kept in the safe of the Church in the parsonage; its oldest entry is dated, Aug. 25, 1770, and reads, "By Sundries paid for Building the Church in Berwick Town as settled . . . 151 pounds, 14 shillings, 7 pence."

The deed referred to in the second paragraph above is not the oldest known deed given by John Abbott; there are four earlier deeds conveying lots in Abbottstown, all are dated Oct. 19, 1763. Since John Abbott did not acquire a valid title to his 504-acre grant of land until May 28, 1762, when the Penn Seal was attached to the Abbott deed, it is probable that the four deeds referred to were the first executed for lots in Abbottstown. This does not mean that there could have been no verbal agreement between Abbott and the Lutheran Congregation before June 4, 1770. Inasmuch as the church had been built and final payment





was made Aug. 25, 1770; and considering the probable slow growth of the need for a house of worship, together with the usual difficulties experienced in financing and completing a building project, it is altogether probable that there was an organized congregation in the vicinity of Abbottstown in 1760, perhaps before.

The record book referred to in the third paragraph above has other interesting information covering the years between August 25, 1770, and July, 1849, a brief summary of which follows. From 1770 to 1815 money is expressed in pounds, shillings and pence; thereafter in dollars and cents. As of Jan. 1, 1772, the debit side of the account begins: Cash as per settlement, 30 pounds 11 shillings and 4 pence. On the 16th of August, 1784, the debit side on page two shows total receipts for the period of 200 pounds 16 shillings and 5 pence. The cash received was derived from gifts and collections reported by officers of the church; some of the latter include the names of Peter Ickes, Fred Barling, Nicholas Bittinger, Sebastian Haffer, George Henry, John Noll, Henry Gitt, George Baugher, and George Ickes.

One of the disbursements on the credit side of the account when Henry Slagle was treasurer, 1772-1786, reads "Oct. 4, 1778, To Sundries . . . 45 pounds 8 shillings 7 pence for building a School-house." Other disbursements between the years 1770 and 1815 were for materials for repairs to buildings, a table cloth, bread, wine and 15 shillings to Minister Herbst, a temporary supply who was minister at the Holtzschwan Church. At the settlement of the account Nov. 18, 1786, contributions were acknowledged from William Mummert, Philip Haverstock, Wm. Mommayer, Henry Walter, Philip Herring, Wm. Huttinstine, Nicholas Ickes and Tobias Haverstock. For the two-year period, 1784-86, 29 pounds were disbursed, leaving a balance of 2 pounds 9 shillings and 2 pence in the treasury.

The schoolhouse referred to in the above account was built prior to Oct. 4, 1778. The school was no doubt established to teach the children of church members to read the Catechism and the Bible. In time the subjects taught included writing and ciphering. There is a record that Thomas Hefferman was a schoolmaster in Abbottstown in 1776 when he enlisted in the Continental Army, Revolutionary War. It is not definitely known whether Heffer



man taught in the Lutheran schoolhouse. Nor is it definitely known whether the teacher Peter Ickes secured, cir. 1798, to teach reading, writing and arithmetic, taught in this school building. A deed of trust, dated Apr. 8, 1842, refers to Joseph Carl who erected a schoolhouse on the ground of the Lutheran Congregation in Abbottstown; again, it is not known whether the reference is to the schoolhouse built before 1778. There is a record, however, that it was decided on the 14th of August, 1847, to sell the schoolhouse for \$73.37½.

### FIRST CHURCH BUILDING

The church building referred to above may have cost approximately \$500.00, depending upon the current exchange rate of Sterling. It was a log structure with a cupola, and was probably weatherboarded. Nothing is known about the interior. It was located on lot No. 72, present site of the Old Dutch Cemetery, and may have faced either German or Water Street. There are no authentic records pertaining to its size or general plan of structure. There are still a number of encased log houses in Abbottstown and without doubt the logs were laid at the corners of the church building as they are in the encased houses. The building was burned in 1829, and with it (tradition says) church records that were stored in it. There are traditions that the building was heated with a stove in which wood was burned; that it caused the fire, and that articles used in administering the Communion were saved.

### SECOND CHURCH BUILDING

The outside appearance of the first brick church was similar to the old church building at Holtzschwan (1959). It was a rectangular structure with a hip roof; the gables faced north and south. An open cupola, within which a bell was hung, graced the roof. The auditorium was open to the roof. Balconies surrounded three sides of the auditorium. The altar area was at the north side of the church, and was enclosed with a railing; its furniture included chairs, a pulpit, and a table; all similar in design to that of the period. Seats were located beneath the balconies, and in the center of the auditorium. A board partition divided the latter row; all







*Present Church with Spire.  
Dedicated 1890.*



seats on the right were reserved for women; those on the left for men. Between the seats under the balconies and in the center of the auditorium, there were aisles leading from outer doors to the pulpit area.

The corner stone of the first brick church was laid June 11, 1830; it stood on the same site on which the present church building is located; i.e., on lot No. 73. The building committee was composed of Nicholas Henry, George Baugher, John Wolf, and Joseph Carl. The elders were Nicholas Henry and Tobias Kepner; the wardens, Joseph Carl, Jonas Henry and Joseph Berlin. The pastor was Jonathan Ruthrauff.

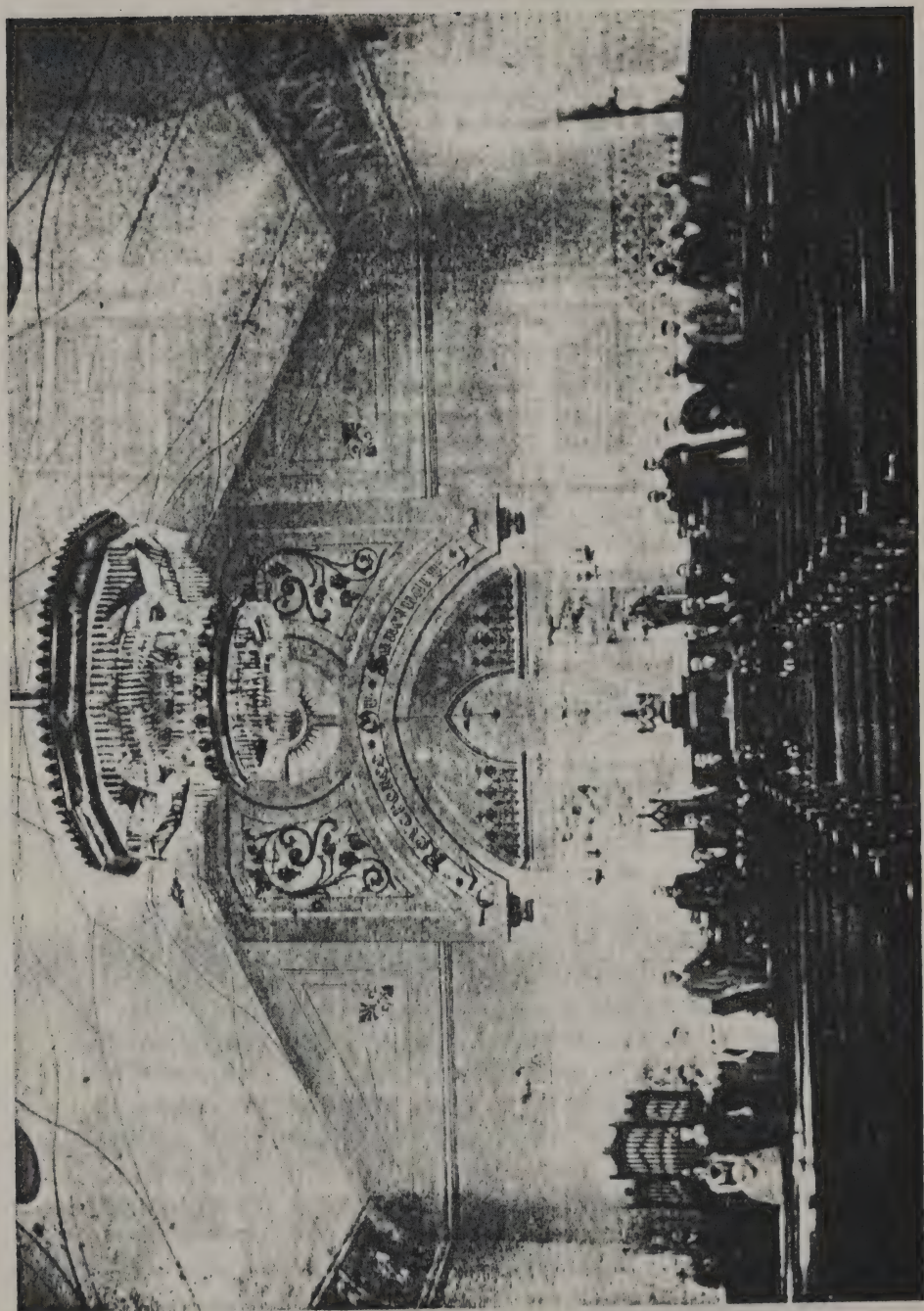
### THIRD CHURCH BUILDING

On the 19th of May, 1888, the Church Council met, Pastor John Tomlinson, presiding, to consider building a new church edifice. This action was prompted by a bequest of William Bittinger amounting to \$3,000.00, conditional upon the raising of \$6,000.00 by the Congregation. The necessary subscriptions were secured and during the summer of 1889 the old church was torn down and the present church edifice was erected; its total cost was \$10,230.82. Elias Roth was the contractor. The church officials were William Bittinger and Samuel Wolf, trustees; Edward Spangler, Samuel Nagle, Solomon Moul and Henry Marshall, elders; Theophilis Haar, Lewis Wolf, Lewis Kobler, and William Hollinger, deacons. Edward P. Miller was secretary of the building committee.

The third church building is located on the site of the second, lot No. 73. Since it is larger than the building it replaced, permission was sought and obtained to reinter several bodies buried immediately behind the old church. The present building is set in from the German Street line by a distance of two feet. The corner stone was laid June 7, 1889, and the church was dedicated Oct. 19, 1890. Only \$5,296.50 of the \$6,000.00 needed to secure the \$3,000.00 Bittinger bequest had been raised by Jan. 28, 1889; the remainder was realized from a sale of the furnishings belonging to the old church. The actual amount thus raised was \$813.00. During the time that the new church was being built, the congregation worshiped in the Reformed Church, and the Sunday School met in the public school building.







*Interior of Present Church as Originally Decorated.*





The church building is semi-Gothic, architecturally. Its spire, towering above a steep roof, could be seen from all highways entering the town. The windows are of the pointed-arch type; those in the auditorium are of stained glass, alike in size, except the large window on the south wall which is more elaborate in design. With the exception of a beautifully proportioned steeple, part of which has been removed, the outside appearance of the church has not changed. The bell, weighing 933 pounds, which cost, with mountings, \$218.43, still hangs in the belfry room of the tower. Inside, the general appearance of the church has undergone marked changes. Originally, the walls of the auditorium were painted a pale tint of gray and decorated with fresco paintings in darker colors. Ornamental designs extended across the north wall and along the side walls at the eaves and at the sills between the windows. On the ceiling, at spaced intervals, there were four cameo-like frescoes; one bore the face of a man, another the head of a lion, a third the head of a calf and the fourth the head of an eagle. The symbols, in the order mentioned, represented the Four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The use of this symbolism has been traced back to almost the beginning of the Christian era; and, notwithstanding differences in its application to the Evangelists during the centuries since, the explanation as given in this paragraph is generally accepted today. (See *Church Symbolism*, Weber; Pub. by Jansen, Cleveland, 1939, pp. 185-190).

The north wall was pierced with an alcove, on both sides of which there were decorative panels. The right panel bore the inscription, "In Remembrance of Me" (I Cor. 11, 24). The left panel bore the inscription in German. "Das Wasserbad im Wort" (Eph. 5, 26; The Water-bath in the Word).

The alcove was centered on the north wall of the auditorium. Above its arch, the artist painted a circular design, on both sides of which, were conventionalized drawings of a vine with clusters of grapes. On the curved edges of the alcove there was a panel bearing the inscription in illuminated letters, "Reverence My Sanctuary" (Lev. 19; 30). A view of the area above the arched alcove gave the impression that it rested upon the capitals of two painted columns based on the floor of the pulpit area.

The rear wall of the alcove sloped forward to the point of the arch. Along the sides of the wall, there were rectangular panels





with identical overall designs done in red and gilt on a background of grey. Between the panels there was a painted arch which pierced a decorative design crossing the wall at the point where the side walls of the alcove began to curve; it rested upon the ends of the pierced design, and was supported by two painted columns. Near its apex there was a painted dove with outstretched wings, and about two feet directly underneath it, an open Bible. The impression made by the painted alcove was not unlike that made by the decorative paintings above and at the sides of the open alcove. The overall decorations of the pulpit area gave the impression that it was higher than it really was. The frescos were done by Mr. C. D. Rudy, Harrisburg, Pa.

The furnishings of the altar area included a pulpit, three upholstered chairs, a baptismal font and a table, used in administering the Holy Communion. The auditorium was lighted for night services with a decorated chandelier, approximately four feet in diameter, hung from the ceiling; it had about twenty kerosene lamps placed in a circular holder. When lighted, the plate glass pendants presented a dazzling appearance. Single lamps were attached to the sides of the alcove, and one hung from the pointed arch of the alcove above the pulpit. The auditorium was heated with two coal-burning furnaces located in the Sunday School room on the ground floor of the church building. During the early years of its occupancy, the Sunday School room was also used for weekly prayer meetings, and an occasional church service during the winter season when it was difficult to heat the auditorium. The main Sunday School room has been redecorated from time to time but does not differ very much from its original appearance. Formerly the present church parlor was the place where weekly prayer meetings were held; it was then heated with a coal-burning stove.

Within the seventy-year period since the erection of the present church edifice the building has undergone at least three or more extensive renovations and/or alterations. During the pastorate of Rev. Paul Gladfelter, the steeple was lowered, the walls of the auditorium and Sunday School room were repainted, and an organ and new altar furniture, together with appropriate furnishings, were installed. When Rev. John Strevig was pastor, the roof was re-covered, the side walls of the building were buttressed, and the auditorium was again repainted. Extensive alterations were made



to the Sunday School room when Rev. Lester J. Karschner was pastor; the walls were repainted, and toilets and a modern heating system was installed. Edward P. Miller of Gettysburg, Pa., donated the organ chimes. Andrew Carnegie contributed \$1,000.00 toward the cost of the organ.

### CHURCH AUDITORIUM RENOVATION

On the 23rd of March, 1958, the Congregation again approved plans for reconstructing the altar area in the Church Auditorium, redecorating the auditorium walls, refinishing the church pews, replacing the carpet, removing a stairway to the auditorium at its north wall, and making other needed alterations and repairs at a cost of approximately \$20,000.00. The rededication services were celebrated April 26, at 10:30 a.m. Dr. D. F. Putman, Pres. CPS, was the invited guest minister. The contractor, in charge of the project, was Mr. Garnet Sites, Chambersburg, Pa.

The pulpit area of the auditorium was rebuilt. The alcove on the north wall was closed. The chancel was widened and its depth increased by removing several church pews at the front of the auditorium.

The altar now touches the north wall of the auditorium. The reredos is centered beneath an arch extending across the north wall, its pillars resting upon the floor of the chancel. The dossal of the reredos extends almost to the arch; it is an imported red and gold brocade featuring pomegranates woven in gold thread. On either side of the dossal, at a slightly lower level, dark red velvet drapery is suspended. The effect of this overall decorative scheme gives an impression of height.

The altar is adorned with a cross, on both sides of which there is one candle and one vase, all gold plated. The altar is covered with hangings appropriate for each season of the church year. The Lutheran Liturgy, resting upon a missal stand is placed on the left side of the altar; the right side is reserved for the elements of the eucharist. Two pedestals, one with a large plate for receiving the offerings of the congregation, complete the furnishing of the sanctuary.

The sanctuary is five steps above the floor of the auditorium. The middle section of the chancel is one step below the level of





*Before Renovation.**After Renovation.*



the sanctuary, and four steps above the auditorium floor; its furnishings include the pulpit, the lectern and two clergy stalls.

The baptismal font stands in front of the lectern, one step above the level of the auditorium floor.

The remaining space on both sides of the chancel along the north wall of the auditorium encloses, behind identical screens, the organ on the left and a stairway to an exit on the ground floor of the church on the right. The choir lofts are located in front of the screens; that on the right is used by the senior choir. The console of the organ and the junior choir share the loft on the left.

The furniture of the chancel and the paneling around it, together with the paneling around the choir lofts, is all genuine walnut finished with a non-gloss varnish.

The woodwork and the seats of the auditorium are finished to harmonize with that of the chancel area. The side walls are painted a light tint of green, and the ceiling a light tint of pink. The entrance doors to the auditorium open from vestibules on the east and west sides of the building to stairways covered with rubber tiling. The aisles of the auditorium and the altar area are carpeted with an all-wool looped maroon carpet.

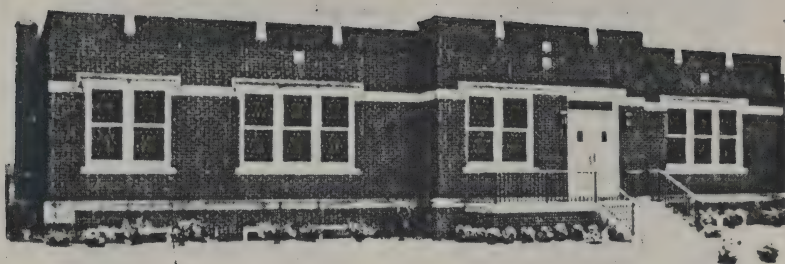
## EDUCATION BUILDING

At the middle of the twentieth century, Sunday School enrollments began to tax current facilities to care for steadily increasing numbers of persons who wished to attend Sunday Schools. On the 17th of January, 1954, the Congregation approved plans for the erection of an Education Building which cost approximately \$52,500.00. The building was dedicated March 13, 1955. It contains a Nursery, rooms for the Kindergarten and Primary Departments, a Children's Chapel, and a Social Room in the basement. The building is modern in construction, well lighted and heated, and is provided with service facilities of many kinds.

The project was initiated during the pastorate of Rev. Karschner. The architect's plans were approved Jan. 17, 1954, and construction was begun Mar. 11, 1954. The building was dedicated exactly one day less than a year later. Dr. George Berkheimer assisted at the ground breaking ceremony; Dr. Harvey D. Hoover, at the cornerstone laying, and Dr. Dwight F. Putman, President





*Education Building.*



of the Central Pennsylvania Synod of the ULCA, at the dedicatory service. The \$45,000.00 needed to meet the total cost of the building was raised over a period of one hundred weeks. A souvenir booklet contains further information about the project.

## PASTORS AND PASTORATES

The appended list includes all the known ministers who served St. John Congregation since its organization. The order of their names and the dates given are, in some instances, questionable. Sources consulted differ; it appears that the records do not always state whether the pastor was regularly called or merely served as a supply before a new pastor was called.

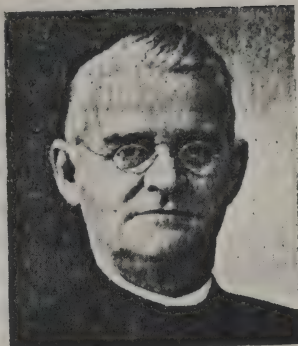
J. George Baugher (Bager)	1760-1785 ?
Daniel Schroeter	1782-1802 ?
John Grob	1802-1803 ?
John C. Rebeneck	1804-1805 ?
John Conrad Reiman	1807-1819
J. Meltzheimer	1819-1824
Jonathan Ruthrauff	1825-1836
Leonard Gearhart	1837-1838
Peter Scheurer	1839-1842
William Heilig	1842-1845
Charles Witmer	1846-1850
Leonard Gearhart	1850-1861
Daniel J. Hauer, D.D.	1862-1872
Michael Snyder	1873-1877
M. Alleman (Supply)	1878-1879
D. Sell (Supply)	1879-3 Mo.
S. P. Orwig	1879-1884
John Tomlinson	1884-1892
Richard H. Clare, D.D.	1892-1908
A. C. Forscht	1908-1911
Frederick C. Sternat	1911-1920
Paul Gladfelder	1920-1938
John Strevig	1939-1941
Henry Snyder Alleman	1941-1948
Lester J. Karschner	1949-







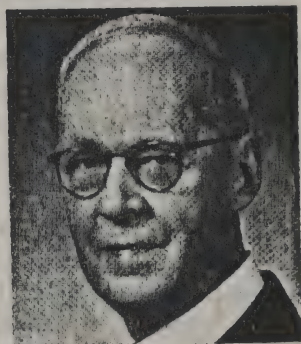
*Rev. John Tomlinson*  
1884-1892



*Rev. R. H. Clare*  
1892-1908



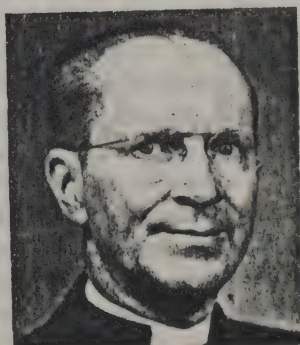
*Rev. Fred Sternat*  
1911-1920



*Rev. Paul Gladfelter*  
1920-1938



*Rev. John Strevig*  
1939-1941



*Rev. Snyder Alleman*  
1941-1948



Dates for the first five pastors are approximate. The years assigned them are based upon statements made in the synodical proceedings as reported in the Documentary History of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, 1748-1821; Library, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa. Owing to the meagerness of information pertaining to the pastors referred to, absolutely accurate dates for their years of service are not possible.

Rev. George J. Baugher is the first known pastor who served the Abbottstown Congregation, which was then part of a Hanover parish. He became pastor of the Conewago Congregation (Hanover), Dec. 16, 1752, and began his ministry there March 10, 1753. In 1763 he accepted the pastorate of a church in New York City, remaining there until 1767, when he became pastor of Christ Church, York, Pa. His connection with Christ Church lasted about two years. Sometime during the two-year period, he moved his family to the Hanover area where he began a second pastorate that lasted until retirement from the ministry about 1785. In 1783 Rev. Baugher is listed as one of the pastors attending a Conference at York, Pa. (p. 186); and in 1787, he is referred to in Ministerium records as Pastor Emeritus (p. 214).

During his pastorates at Hanover, Rev. Baugher served Lutheran congregations at Abbottstown and other points in Pennsylvania and Maryland. The union between Hanover and Abbottstown existed for many years, terminating about 1782. Since Rev. Baugher was active in ministering to Lutherans living within the area referred to, it is quite likely that he organized the Abbottstown congregation during one of his Hanover pastorates. The Abbott deed, conveying lots No. 72 and No. 73 to Nicholas Bittinger, Jacob Berlin, Daniel Schlegel and John Stibler was executed June 4, 1770. The gift of Abbott indicates the presence of a functioning church organization. Inasmuch as Rev. Baugher's second Hanover pastorate did not begin until 1767, it is probable that his ministry to the Abbottstown Church began sometime between the years 1753 and 1763. In his will, Rev. Baugher refers to himself as Minister of the Gospel, German Lutheran Church of Berwick Township (then in York Co., Pa.). Rev. Baugher resided on a 170-acre tract of land in Berwick Township, located about one-eighth mile north of Hershey (Pigeon) Hill, and east of the Hanover-Abbottstown highway. There is a tradition that





he planned and helped build the stone house in which he lived for some time.

Rev. John George Baugher (also spelled Bager) was born at Niederlingweiler in Nassau-Saarbrücken, Germany, on the 19th of March, 1725. He was educated for the ministry in Germany, and was ordained December 7, 1749. He came to America Oct. 23, 1752. His ministry in America began within five months of his arrival. He died June 9, 1791, aged 66 yrs. 2 mo. and 20 days. He married Anna Elizabeth Schwab; she died Dec. 7, 1790, aged 61 years. They are both buried on the family plot in the old Dutch Cemetery.

After the pastorate of Rev. Baugher, and until the coming of Rev. Leonard Gearhart, the Lutheran Church at Abbottstown was served by at least six different pastors; the first of them, Rev. Daniel Schroeter, appears to have been an assistant of Rev. Baugher during the later years of the latter's ministry. It is probable that he served the congregation at Abbottstown until 1790 or 1802 (p. 230). His name is not on the Ministerium list in 1803, nor in Abbottstown records after 1806. The period herein referred to opened with more or less dissension over one or two pastors, but gradually stabilized and ended harmoniously. Three of the six pastors served a total of about thirty-four years of the fifty-four year period. They were Daniel Schroeter, Conrad Reiman, and Jonathan Ruthrauff. It was during the pastorate of the last mentioned that the first church building burned.

With the coming of Rev. Gearhart in 1837, and during the thirteen-year period following, the pastorates were brief. After serving only one year, Rev. Gearhart resigned; he returned, however, in 1850, for an eleven-year pastorate. The three pastors who served the Congregation between Rev. Gearhart's pastorates were Peter Scheurer, William Heilig and Charles Witmer.

It should be noted that several of the pastors included in the above list merely supplied during vacancies in the pastorate at Abbottstown. On the 2nd of June, 1798, Rev. Schroeter was asked to permit Rev. John Grob to serve the Abbottstown congregation (p. 300). Two years later, the Congregation again asked for the services of Rev. Grob who had been serving the Holtzschwan congregation since 1796. The careful reader will no doubt wonder who was supply pastor at Abbottstown during 1802-1803.



In 1804 Rev. John C. Rebeneck was serving Bender's Church, Adams Co., Pa. No record of his service at Abbottstown is referred to in the Ministerium records; however, an Abbottstown church record states that he was pastor, 1804-1805. It may be that both Grob and Rebeneck supplied at Abbottstown for brief periods of time.

In 1807 Rev. John C. Rieman was authorized by the Ministerium to assume the pastorate at Abbottstown. He may not have gone there, however, until 1809. He continued to serve the Abbottstown congregation until 1819.

Before and after the turn of the 18th century, the supply of pastors was inadequate to meet the demand. Rev. Schroeter once notified the Ministerium that he was serving eight congregations (p. 196). Moreover, many pastors were poorly trained for the work of the ministry. The Ministerium refused to license or even recommend some of them. A few of them sought to increase their income by soliciting supply positions. The facts cited caused minority-membership agitation which sometimes resulted in dissension and at times even forced the Ministerium to discipline offenders.

Rev. J. F. Melsheimer, Rev. M. J. Alleman, and Rev. Daniel Sell are believed to have been supply pastors; the first named was assistant to his father, Rev. F. V. Melsheimer, St. Matthew, Hanover. The dates assigned to pastors Melsheimer, Ruthrauff, Scheurer, Witmer, Gearhart, Alleman (M. J.), and Orwig differ slightly from those assigned them in the Hanover, East Berlin and New Oxford lists as published in the Centennial History of the West Pennsylvania Synod, 1825-1925. The differences may be due to reliance upon memory on the part of the recorder, to the periods of membership in the so-called "Charge," or to supply-pastor services unauthorized by the Synod (e.g., J. Grob).

After Civil War days, the longest pastorates were those of Daniel J. Hauer, Richard H. Clare and Paul Gladfelter. The combined length of their services approximated half of the ninety-year period between 1862 and 1952. Rev. Hauer, 1806-1901, organized the Spring Grove Lutheran congregation at the time he was pastor at Lischey's Church which is known to have belonged to the Abbottstown Charge in 1849, but separated from it later. Rev. Clare was born and reared in Albany, N. Y. He served the German





Lutheran Church at Chambersburg, 1876-1881. He had three sons in the Lutheran ministry: Rev. Harry E. Clare, Rev. Robert D. Clare, and Rev. Martin L. Clare. Rev. Paul Gladfelter, 1882-1959, came to Abbottstown from York Springs, Aug. 16, 1920; his was the longest pastorate in the history of St. John, with the possible exception of Rev. J. George Baugher's, whose connection with St. John, both as supply and as pastor, covered approximately a quarter of a century.

### MINISTRY OF "SONS OF ST. JOHN CHURCH"

\*H. L. Baugher, Sr., Gettysburg College Professor, 1832-1841; President, 1865-1868.

\*H. L. Baugher, Jr., Gettysburg College Professor, 1871-1880; 1881-1899.

Luther B. Wolf, Missionary, India, 1883-1907; Sec'y F. M. Society, 1908-

Joseph B. Wolf, Minister, Glen Rock, 1877-1918.

William H. Jordy, Minister, 1886, 1887-1889, Wrightsville.

Howard Heilman, Minister, 1887-1893, Mt. Joy.

A. M. Heilman, Minister, 1892-1916, Dallastown, Shrewsbury, Hanover (St. Matthew).

Adkin G. Wolf, Minister, McConnellsburg, West Fairview, 1900-1917.

Harry E. Clare, Minister, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Wilkinsburg, 1898-

Robert D. Clare, Minister, York, Johnstown, Baltimore, 1903-

Martin L. Clare, Minister, Spring Grove, Apollo, 1905-

Norman S. Wolf, Minister, Shrewsbury, Bloomsburg, Fairfield, 1907-

George H. Berkheimer, Minister, Arendtsville, 1935; Sec'y Central Pa. Synod, 1950; Exec. Sec'y, Board of Pensions, ULCA, 1955.

Harvey D. Hoover, D.D., President of Carthage College; Professor in the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa.

### PARISHES

The writer has found no authentic record of an organized parish including the Abbottstown Congregation prior to 1849. It appears,

\*Descendants of Rev. J. George Baugher.



however, that the Hanover and Abbottstown congregations were more or less closely associated for a good many years. In the year 1770, Rev. J. George Baugher resided in the Conewago district and served old congregations in what is now known as Adams County. In 1797, a minute of the Ministerium refers to "the union which has existed for years between the Conewago Congregation (Hanover) and Abbottstown."

It appears that the union referred to does not mean that the Abbottstown and Hanover congregations formed what was later called a parish. It is quite probable that the primary purpose of the union was to provide a Lutheran ministry for Abbottstown Lutherans whether organized or not. This objective seems to have been achieved by assigning smaller and weaker congregations to the care of ordained ministers serving larger congregations. Pastors who were known for their loyalty to Lutheran doctrine and their zeal for furthering the interests of the Church could be depended upon to counteract divisive influences set in motion by self-seeking and often improperly trained and/or licensed persons posing as pastors. A study of the minutes of the Lutheran Ministerium seems to justify this statement.

In any event, the bounds of the Abbottstown parish, if there was one before the middle of the nineteenth century, were very indefinite and the changes in the number and the names of congregations belonging were quite frequent. In 1815, for example, Conrad Rieman, then pastor at Abbottstown, reported to Synod, without naming them, that he served eight congregations. In 1830, John Ruthrauff reported that he served congregations at Hanover, New Oxford, Littlestown and Jacobs church. In the sense in which we now speak of an organized parish, it is quite likely that there was no Abbottstown parish until about the middle of the nineteenth century.

The first known record relating to the existence of a parish is dated, 1849. As of that date, the parish consisted of Abbottstown, Leschey's and New Oxford congregations. Later the parish included Ziegler's. About 1858 Ziegler's withdrew and Trinity at East Berlin united with the parish. Leschey's withdrew about 1872; and New Oxford, in 1893. After the latter date, the parish pastor, Rev. Dr. R. H. Clare, conducted services for a time for the congregation at New Baltimore, but there is no record of its





admission to the parish. As of July 1, 1957, the parish consisted of St. John at Abbottstown.

After the formation of the parish, joint council meetings were held rather frequently. Representatives from each congregation belonging met to discuss matters of common concern; these included the calling of new pastors, the reaction of members toward pastors in office, the election of delegates to represent the parish at church conferences and synodical meetings, and the fixing of an apportionment for expenses covering rental, cost of repairs, and payment of taxes on the parsonage property at Abbottstown. For many years the congregations comprising the parish paid sums agreed upon by the joint councils from time to time; sometimes promptly, sometimes tardily. After the depression following World War I, St. John had to finance, for the most part, expenses of the parsonage property. More recently, an agreement was reached by the Joint Council of the Parish whereby the East Berlin Congregation agreed to pay fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per month to help defray the expenses incident to the maintenance of the parsonage.

### CHURCH SERVICES

For many years after the congregation was organized, German was the only language used in the worship service of the church. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the use of German became less frequent. On the 25th of December, 1850, Council decided that all night services should be conducted in the English language, and that every third sermon in daytime should also be in English. This action was taken during the pastorate of Leonard Gearhart. For some years after 1850, however, one of the requirements of candidates for the pastorate continued to be ability to preach German sermons. The writer recalls a few German sermons preached by Rev. Tomlinson and Rev. Richard Clare. A German sermon was preached at the laying of the cornerstone in 1889.

The attitude of church members toward the form of church service has undergone a marked change in recent years. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, a very simple form of service was conducted by the pastor. It consisted of an opening prayer, congregational singing, reading of the Scriptures, a prayer by the pastor, followed by a second hymn and the pastor's sermon. Sometimes the choir rendered a selection. The service usually ended



with the singing of a third hymn and the benediction by the pastor. On the whole the service was not longer than at present.

During the pastorate of Rev. Clare, slight changes were made in the conduct of the worship service. At first, they had to do with "The Service" as found in the "old" church hymnal. Subsequent pastors also added changes until the pastorate of Rev. Gladfelter when the full "Service" was used. Pastors Strevig, Alleman, and Karschner used the "old" service until March 28, 1958, since which time the Revised Hymnal "Service" has been used.

The order of divine worship in St. John has always included a service of song. There are no records of organists or of choir leaders prior to the erection of the present church building. However, the writer remembers when Rev. R. H. Clare, as choir leader, made use of a metronome to insure the tempo of choir singing; he also recalls Rev. Clare's inspiring tenor voice, on occasions, when he joined the congregation in singing the grand old hymns of the church. The known church organists include the names of Mrs. Carrie Jordy Hafer, Miss Dora Nagle, Mrs. Leslie Reinecker, and Mrs. Billy Smith. Known choir directors include Faber Wildasin and Herbert Hoke.

In addition to the regular worship service of the church, St. John had, from earliest times, a weekly prayer meeting. Attendance at such meetings usually included a small percentage of the membership of the church. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, pastors complained about "languishing prayer meetings." In spite of periodic revivals, conditions did not improve and prayer meetings were poorly attended. The writer recalls that he accompanied his mother to poorly-attended prayer meetings in the second church building. Beginning about 1892, the youth of the congregation organized a Christian Endeavor Society; they were indebted to older members of the prayer-meeting group who frequented their meetings and gave helpful guidance. One of the purposes of the Society was to train its members to pray in public meetings. A similar type of activity is now carried on by the Luther League. Within recent years, attendance at prayer meetings seemed, no longer, to justify continuing them.

Evening congregational services, except the comparatively few of a special nature, are no longer held. The Luther League, the Woman's Missionary Society, and the Sunday School are among





the most actively functioning of the Congregation's auxiliary organizations. Before Trinity Congregation separated from the parish, church services at St. John alternated with the Sunday School at St. John. Currently St. John church services always follow the Sunday School.

## CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Little is known about the rules and regulations that governed the conduct of Abbottstown Lutherans during the first half century of the congregation's history. That church authorities faced situations not unlike those which still worry them, is attested by certain minutes of the Ministerium between the years 1780 and 1806. At meetings of Synod during the period cited troublesome cases came up repeatedly for decision. At the Hanover meeting of Synod about the beginning of the eighteenth century, it was decided "that it is very wrong and unchristian arbitrarily to close the church to any preacher of the Gospel, and therefore the conduct against Rev. Schroeter in Abbottstown is disapproved." The dissension over their pastor's conduct lasted approximately a quarter of a century, and no doubt had a bad effect upon the members of his congregation at Abbottstown.

On the 11th of December, 1836, the members of the Lutheran congregation at Berwaick (Abbotts Town) met to consider the formulation and adoption of a set of rules and regulations for the government of their congregation. The resolutions adopted were:

1. That every one who will be a member of this congregation shall have his or her name (including his or her family) entered in a book to be kept for that purpose and write down (or order to be done) opposite his or her name the sum which he or she will give per year for the salary of the Minister he shall get. And what is once written shall be paid yearly, and every year, so long as they remain a member of said congregation. And the Congregation shall be notified six or eight weeks before said year is out that they pay into the hands of the treasurer their respective subscriptions on or before the expiration of said year.
2. That anyone who wishes to become a member shall have their names entered in the aforesaid book and subject to the same rules as above stated.



3. That anyone who does not comply with the above rules shall not be considered a member of said church nor receive the benefits thereof without pay.

4. That if anyone shall say in good conscience that he or she can not after said year in justice to themselves & family pay the same amount they had subscribed then the Church Council shall make an abatement according to their circumstances.

5. That a committee of three be appointed for the purpose of agreeing with the Minister whom we shall next get as to the amount of salary per year to preach every two weeks once in German and once in the English language.

6. That John Trostle, Joseph Carl & John Wolf be the Committee as before stated.

7. That all the members who were present (or those who hereafter concur) sign their names hereto, and as follows

John Wolf, Pres.

Joseph R. Henry, Sec'y

Joseph Carl

Nicholas Henry

Michael Henry

Daniel Motter

Joseph Berlin

Peter Miller

Edward Haines

George Henry (town)

John Hull

John Trostle

Henry Stock

Charles Grant

George Ickes

William Berlin

Frederick Berlin

Benjamin Kepner

George Henry (weaver)

(name indistinct)

The record states that the resolutions were adopted unanimously.

A serious attempt was made to discipline members who were guilty of unchristian conduct. The following cases, selected from the Minute Book of Council, during the period ending about the time of the Civil War, illustrate the nature of the case and the way in which it was handled.

1. Council members were delegated to act as intermediaries in an attempt to compose the differences between two prominent church members.

2. Accusations against the character of church members must be made at least four weeks before Communion if the accusation is to be considered by Council.





3. Council ruled that one member against whom charges were made should not be permitted to commune until the charge against her was cleared up to the satisfaction of Council.

4. Council suspended a member from church privileges until he reforms.

Sometimes Council was worried by the disregard shown for church property. Examples of such disregard resulted in the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. No cattle of any kind may be pastured on the graves or church yard.

2. Boys in the habit of entering the graveyards, either on the Sabbath or week days, dirtying or defacing the tombstones, and throwing stones at the church bell, will be dealt with according to law.

## ARTICLES OF CONSTITUTION

On the day of the laying of the cornerstone of the first brick church building a Constitution for the government of the Congregation was adopted. In accordance therewith, the Church was named "John's Church of the Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Abbottstown." The original copy was in German and in English.

In 1853, another constitution was adopted, and on the 30th of April, 1939, still another constitution was adopted, this time in order to conform to the model constitution of the United Lutheran Church in America for local congregations.

On the 10th of January, 1954, during the pastorate of Rev. L. J. Karschner, a fourth Constitution was adopted by the Congregation.

## CHURCH CHARTERS

The original Charter of the Church was granted Sept. 20, 1853 (see Bk. S, p. 351; Adams County Court House). On petition of the Officers of St. John Lutheran Church of Abbottstown, Pa., the Charter of 1853 was amended and confirmed by the Adams County Court, March 1, 1907. The 1907 charter was again amended and confirmed on the 10th of Jan., 1954. The change was made to grant female members the right to vote; they had enjoyed the franchise for years, notwithstanding the original charter had not authorized it.



## CHURCH OFFICIALS

Church records bearing dates prior to 1832, indicate that church officials were originally called trustees, elders and deacons. Members who served in one capacity or another before the date given have been referred to elsewhere in this narrative. The first record of a Good Friday election is dated 1847. The custom of holding meetings on that day may have originated some years earlier; it was still followed during the pastorate of Rev. R. H. Clare. It is not known when the custom was discontinued. Scores of church members have served the Congregation faithfully, and in some instances for considerable periods of time. The method of electing church officials has not been changed materially; it is a democratic procedure in which every member who wishes may have a voice in choosing candidates for vacant offices.

The number of times church councils meet during the year has varied more or less since 1832. Under date of April 27, 1851, at an organizational meeting of Council for that year, it was decided to meet only four times; viz., on the last Saturday of June, September, December and March. More recently Council met oftener, but sometimes irregularly. Currently, it meets monthly throughout the year in regular session.

The official body of the Congregation has been called "The Church Council" for many years. Currently it is composed of ten members, six of whom are called deacons, and four elders. The President of Council is the Pastor. There is a vice president who acts in the pastor's absence, or when the pastorate is vacant; council members elect him, a secretary and several treasurers of separate funds, usually chosen from their membership. Council functions through committees, each officered by a chairman. A financial secretary, charged with keeping a record of contributions to the different funds of the church, allocates money received to the treasurer of the appropriate fund.

The constitution provides that members of Council are to be elected for a term of two years; however, they may be re-elected for another two years, but thereafter they are ineligible for re-election to the same office for one year. Voting for church officials is restricted to church members; however, only church members twenty-one years old may vote to authorize expenditures for erecting and maintaining church buildings.





Council may nominate two persons each for all vacancies on Council. The Congregation may nominate an additional person for all vacancies. Nomination must be made at least one week prior to election. Currently the former distinction once made between the eldership and the deaconship, as respects qualifications, is disregarded.

Church officials who are known to have served as Councilmen at one time or another between the years 1832 and 1959 are included in the following list, arranged alphabetically by family name (not chronologically):

Allewalt, Jacob	Fisher, Jacob
Alwine, Peter	Fissel, Clayton
Alwine, Mark	Flieger, Theodore
Altland, Mervin	Freed, Elmer
Alleman, Martin	Geiselman, Jacob
Anthony, Bernard	Gitt, Henry
Auchey, Charles	Graeff, Joseph
Auchey, D. S.	Graff, Tempest
Auchey, Claude	Graff, Barnet
Auchey, Harold	Graff, Pierce
Berlin, Joseph	Griffin, O. G.
Bender, Jacob	Gross, Wilmer
Benton, George	Haar, Henry
Beck, Philip	Haar, Emanuel
Bender, Jeremiah	Haar, Valentine
Bittinger, William	Haar, Glenn
Berkheimer, Henry	Hafer, Sebastian
Bortner, Robert	Hafer, Frank
Beck, John	Hafer, Homer
Berkheimer, Harry	Haines, Edward
Berkheimer, Nathaniel	Haverstock, Henry
Cashman, Samuel J.	Heilman, Daniel
Christ, Michael	Heilman, Charles
Craumer, Z. E.	Henry, Jeremiah
Duncan, Samuel H.	Henry, Joseph R.
Eisenhart, Willis W.	Henry, Michael
Ehrhart, S. K.	Hetrick, Frank
Emig, Robert	Hoffheins, Elmer, Sr.



Hoffheins, George	Miller, George W.
Hoffheins, Lester	Miller, Edward P.
Hoffheins, Dale	Minter, Charles
Hoffheins, Elmer, Jr.	Moul, Solomon
Hoke, David	Moul, Robert
Hoke, Richard	Myers, Lewis S.
Hoke, George	Myers, John
Hoke, Harry	Myers, Luther
Hoke, Ronald	Nagle, Samuel, Sr.
Hollinger, David	Nagle, Israel
Hollinger, William	Newcome, Jesse
Hull, Henry	Ostrom, G. A.
Ickes, George	Pfleger, John
Jordy, George	Rodgers, A. H.
Jordy, Lewis	Rodgers, Earl
Kepner, Joseph	Rodgers, Dale
Kepner, John	Rodgers, Wilmer
Kellenberger, Edward	Rodgers, William C.
Kobler, Henry	Rohrbaugh, Luther
Kobler, Lewis	Roomsburg, Thomas
Laughman, Clifford	Ruth, Stewart
Lillich, Abraham	Sagola, Sidney
Lillich, George	Sanders, Richard
Lillich, John	Slothour, M. L.
Lillich, Raymond	Slothour, Charles
Livingston, O. C.	Slothour, Reuben
Markel, Peter	Slaybaugh, Bruce
Markel, John	Smith, Curvin
Meckley, Harry	Smith, Billy B.
Meckley, George	Snyder, Charles
Miller, Norman	Stambaugh, Allen
Metzger, Samuel	Spangler, Edward
Metzger, Washington	Spangler, Henry
Marshall, Henry	Stahl, Edward
Martin, D. C.	Stevens, Henry
Menges, George	Stevens, Charles
Miller, Samuel	Stine, Emanuel
Miller, Silas	Stock, Henry
Miller, Henry	Strasbaugh, Ray





Swope, Clinton	Wolf, Edward
Swope, Charles	Wolf, William
Trimmer, Wesley	Wolf, Lewis
Trostle, Edward	Wolf, Samuel
Wertz, Jacob	Wolf, Isaac
Wildasin, Blaine	Wolf, Paul F.
Wildasin, Rodger	Wolf, S. L.
Wisler, Calvin	Wolf, S. S.
Wolf, Aaron	Yohe, C. B.

### PARSONAGE

The movement to secure a parsonage originated during the first half of the nineteenth century. It culminated in the acquisition of a property situated on three lots east of the present church building. The deed conveying title to this property was executed October 19, 1837; it states that "the three lots are improved with a two-story log dwelling house with shop attached, a well of water and a log stable." The owner of the property at the time of its transfer was Henry Gitt and his wife, Nancy; they sold it for \$300. The Gitts acquired the property from Samuel Fahnestock on the 4th of May, 1836, who bought it at a sheriff sale, Apr. 26, 1836. Prior to the latter date, the property belonged to Philip Shank; it was sold to satisfy a claim against it by the executors of the will of George Baugher when the latter's estate was settled.

The log house was encased in brick during the year 1851. At that time other improvements were made to the property. Three hundred dollars was borrowed by the building committee, consisting of Isaac Wolf, Samuel Metzger, and Joseph R. Henry, to pay for the improvements. On the 1st of February, 1862, Council decided to build a "brick addition, 17 ft. by 30 ft., with porch and balcony" to the improved log structure. Five and one-half months later, the building committee presented a bill of \$689.48 to pay for the addition. It was decided at the time to solicit subscriptions to pay the bill. There was considerable difficulty in raising the money. On the 4th of September, 1862, a resolution was adopted to "assess each church member according to his valuation" to raise the money, "provided it can't be raised voluntarily." Further action was taken June 10, 1865, calling upon members to contribute "under penalty of forfeiting their membership" and the "privilege



of burying their dead on the cemetery." As late as the close of the year, 1865. Council was still experiencing difficulty collecting the money.

A third addition to the present parsonage was built shortly after its authorization by Council in 1892; it is known as the pastor's study, and replaced the "shop attached" referred to in the deed when the property was acquired. Rev. Clare was pastor at the time.

In recent years numerous changes have been made to the interior of the parsonage. There have been repeated paperings and paintings, hard wood floors have been laid in a number of rooms, a bathroom has been provided and an automatic gas heating plant has replaced the old coal-burning furnace.

It appears that the "log stable" was replaced with a frame weatherboard structure sometime after the Civil War; no record of the exact date has been found.

On the 15th of May, 1871, a Committee was appointed "to settle with William Gitt as to the road or alley leading to the stable of the parsonage"; it was agreed to give Gitt \$1.00 per year for the right of way, provided Gitt would "keep up the fence at his expense."

### SEXTON HOUSE

This property was acquired from Eliza Bittinger and her husband, William, on the 26th of April, 1886, "for \$1.00 and natural love for the Church and support of the same." The property is located on lot No. 70 and was conveyed to the elders, wardens and trustees and their successors, of the Evangelical Lutheran Congregation. . . . "Officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are forever prohibited from selling the lot, except lots laid out for burial of the dead."

Within recent years, extensive improvements have been made to the house, both inside and outside. A one-story out-kitchen was removed and a new two-story wing was added. Water and light have been provided and pavements were laid about the building during the years 1949 and 1950.

Lot No. 70 on which the Sexton House is located was originally deeded to Nicholas Wolf by John Abbott on the 19th of October, 1763. It may be that Wolf built a log house upon it. The front





part of the present structure is made of logs; currently it is encased with weatherboard. Between the years 1772 and 1886 the title to the property changed ten times. On the 26 of April, 1886, Mrs. William Bittinger deeded the property to St. John. The terms upon which the property was deeded are referred to in the first paragraph under this heading.

### PARISH HOUSE

The Parish House is located upon lot No. 71. The original Abbott deed to this lot has not been located. On the 30th of November, 1805, and again on the 22nd of January, 1813, the property was sold at sheriff sales. On the 5th of March, 1939, it belonged to Frederick Wolf. Thereafter, the grantees who bought and sold the property were: 1) Susan Gitt Lehman, Annie Hollinger, Charles Gitt, Daniel Bear, William Stoner, and Henry C. Hollinger; 2) after Apr. 14, 1890, John B. Trimmer and wife Catharine, who transferred it 3) to Lewis H. Trimmer, and 4) after Apr. 1, 1915, to Trustees, Elders, and Deacons of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Abbottstown, Pa.

John Trimmer and family were living in the house when it was secured by the Ladies' Aid Society during the pastorate of Rev. Frederick Sternat. He was a watch and clock cleaner and repairer. The house then (1920) standing on the lot was torn down and the present Parish House was built upon the site during the early years of the pastorate of Rev. Gladfelter, about 1925. An addition was built to it in 1951.

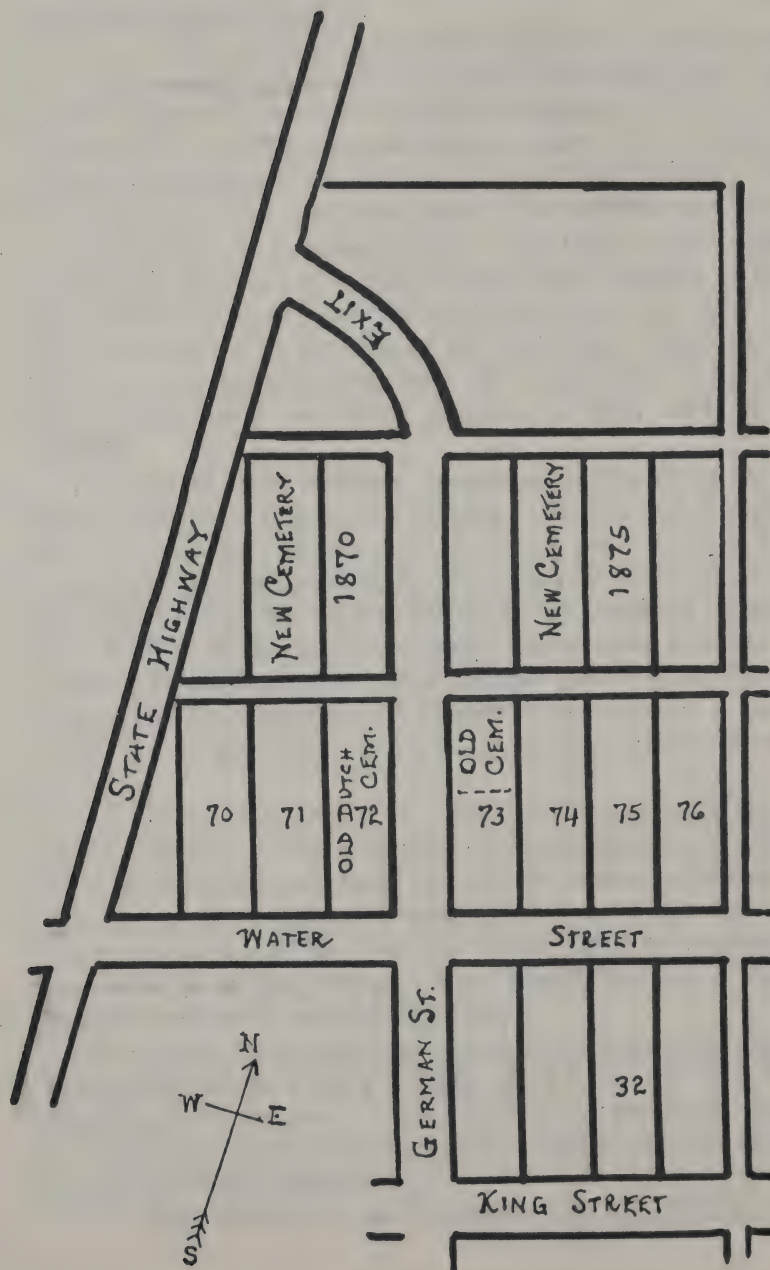
Currently the Parish House is still used by the Ladies' Aid Society to serve dinners. For several years it was used by church and school organizations to "put on" plays. More recently it has been rented to Election Boards to hold the primary and general elections. Elsewhere in this narrative, reference is made to the part played by the Ladies Aid Society in financing the original cost of the building, its annex, and the maintenance of the property.

### CEMETERIES

The ownership of the cemeteries is vested in the Congregation of St. John Lutheran Church. The original grants by John Abbott stipulated that they were to be used for a church site and a bury-



# A Plot of the Cemeteries







ing ground. The first burials were made on lot No. 72. After the second church was built, burials were made on lot No. 73, rear of present church building.

On the 15th of November, 1875, Margaret D. Jordy, widow of George Jordy and daughter of Henry Martzolff, gave a tract of land adjoining the north end of lots numbered 73, 74, 75, 76 to be used as a burial ground on condition that she be allowed to retain fourteen burial lots for use of herself and friends; choice to be made after the tract was plotted. This offer was accepted.

On the 20th of December, 1870, Council took action looking toward the purchase of a tract of land then belonging to Frederick Wolf; the tract joined the north end of lots No. 70, 71, 72, and was bounded on the west by the East Berlin Turnpike. The tract was purchased in February, 1871, and after it had been plotted was opened for burial purposes in May, 1871; it cost \$300.00

The deed of Eliza Bittinger, conveying lot No. 70 to the Lutheran Church, has provisions relating to burials and the sale of lots; it states that "the net proceeds arising from the sale of lots (originally, parts of town lot No. 70), and rent of the house shall be applied exclusively for betterments to the Cemetery adjoining, and of which the lot becomes a part." Furthermore it stands that "officers in their succession shall see that gravel walks touching cemetery lots of Bittingers and Eberlys be kept clean of grass and weeds and in good order in every respect from year to year for all time."

The oldest burial ground is commonly referred to as the Old Dutch Cemetery. It has a number of tombstones bearing inscriptions in German. Many birth dates on the stones go back to the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Very many members of the Congregation during the first half century after its organization are buried on it. The graves of John Abbott and Rev. J. George Baugher are two of especial significance.

The second oldest part of the cemeteries is located immediately behind the present church building on lot No. 73; it is often called the Old Cemetery. It, too, contains the graves of many of the oldest members of the Congregation; chiefly, however, of those belonging to later generations.

The third addition to the cemeteries was opened about four



years before the fourth; burials have been made on them concurrently, and until recently most interments on both have been of people active in the community prior to the opening of the twentieth century. The most recent lots plotted on these additions lie, in the former along the northern line of lots No. 70, 71 and 72; and in the latter, along the northern line of lots No. 74, 75 and 76.

It appears that Council acted for the Congregation for many years in matters pertaining to the management, care and upkeep of the Cemeteries. On the 26th of Nov., 1858, an early regulation forbidding the burial of suicides on the cemetery was rescinded. Approximately a quarter of a century later, the treasures of the cemetery and the church were consolidated, and on the 2nd of December in 1881 a regulation was set up whereby a down payment of one-half the price of a burial lot and proper assurances for the remainder was required before the lot could be occupied. It is probable that the trustees were charged with the oversight of the cemeteries during the earlier years of the church's history.

The writer has not been able to locate a record establishing the date when the Cemetery Board was made responsible for the administration of the cemeteries. A minute of Council, dated Feb. 7, 1854, states that it was decided on that date to lay out forty-eight lots for burial purpose immediately behind the church building, each to be 10 ft. by 7 ft. in size, with a 3 foot space for passage between every two lots.

It is probable that the management of the cemeteries was delegated to the Cemetery Board when the first constitution of the Board was adopted, April 10, 1924. It is also probable that the transfer was prompted 1) by the movement to provide perpetual care for burial lots and 2) by bequests which were made by church members who had died, or by their immediate families.

The constitution referred to was revised and a new one was adopted, Feb. 24, 1946. Its provisions charged the Cemetery Board with the administration of the cemeteries; specifically, as they relate to the membership of the Board, its duties, the raising of funds, the expenditure of money, the upkeep of lots, etc.

The condition of the cemeteries has always been a major concern of the Congregation. At a time when cattle were pastured on vacant town lots, and along the sides of roads, the cemeteries





were surrounded with what was then generally called a "picket fence," which had to be repaired every few years. There was a time also when the entrance to the cemeteries was by way of a gate similar to the one still in use at Mt. Olive Reformed Cemetery. The gateway was located opposite the present public schoolhouse. After the menace of roving cattle no longer threatened, the gate and fences were removed and a barberry hedge was planted along the East Berlin Turnpike. A part of the duty of sextons was to keep the grass short in summer, to dig graves, and to perform such other duties as pertained to the care and general appearance of the cemeteries.

During the years 1947 and 1950 the Congregation authorized the raising of a \$535 fund to beautify the cemeteries, to provide additional driveways and pave them, and to "spall" the approaches to the burial grounds. The project was begun during the pastorate of Rev. Alleman and completed during that of Rev. Karschner. The closing of the extension of German Street from the northernmost line of the original town plot to the East Berlin turnpike not only provided additional burial space, but made possible the paving of that part of the street adjoining the church properties and the opening of a driveway and an entrance at the turnpike level. A bequest by Charles Diehl, as a memorial to Frank and Lydia Menges Hetrick, made possible the entrance gate referred to and the landscaping of the immediate area about it, at a cost of \$1,600.00; the dedication ceremony was held Sept. 30, 1951. A year later, the brick pavement was removed in front of the church building and shrubbery was planted in front and at the west side of the building.

Reference has been made to the bequests of church members for the care of the cemeteries. The following extracts from several Wills are cited to acquaint the reader with the conditions upon which the bequests were made. In all cases cited, the bequests were made to officers and their successors of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Abbottstown; i.e., in the name of the corporate title of the Congregation. 1) William Bittinger bequeathed, Mar. 9, 1889, four hundred dollars to be loaned on approved security, "the annual interest thereof to be applied to keep up the graves on my lots and Daniel Eberly's; also those of his great-grandfather, Nicholas Bittinger, and his grandfather, Joseph Bittinger." A re-



lease signed June 7, 1890, states that this request was reduced in the amount of \$20 to pay collateral inheritance tax. 2) Eliza Bittinger bequeathed \$1,000 upon similar conditions with the additional condition that any balance remaining after attending faithfully to lots mentioned, may be appropriated to the payment of the salary of the sexton. 3) Mary E. Spangler bequeathed \$1,000 for the upkeep of two Spangler lots and three Ickes lots. 4) Lucy A. Wehler bequeathed \$300.00 for the upkeep and maintenance of the family burial lot. 5) Mary Trimmer bequest, approximating \$450.00 after the inheritance tax was deducted, is held in trust by a York, Pa., Trust Company, and was given to finance the upkeep of the Trimmer lots. 6) In 1945, William Hafer, and in 1950, Jordy Hafer, bequeathed \$1,000.00 and \$300.00 respectively for the upkeep of their cemetery lots. An inheritance tax reduced the former bequest, and a part of the Bittinger bequests which had been deposited in a national bank was lost; however, the remaining sums were invested in U. S. Government Bonds, Series F, which restored the original amounts in both bequests at maturity. The Jordy Hafer bequest stipulates that the lots of his parents and grandparents are to be properly cared for. Jordy Hafer also willed \$1,500.00 to the Congregation, the interest of which is to be used to pay for an annual service in memory of his mother, Carrie Jordy Hafer, and the yearly decoration of his own and his parents graves with flowers. From time to time, church records refer to gifts in smaller amounts. The total amount in the Cemetery Endowment Fund, currently, is \$14,640.00, and is under the direct control of the Church Council.

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During the pastorate of Rev. Gladfelter, the fences that surrounded the cemeteries were removed; some broken tombstones were repaired, and all but a few of the stones in the Old Cemeteries, were placed in north-south lines to make mowing grass easier.

A plot of the cemeteries, prepared by Rev. R. H. Clare, appears to have been the only one made until the fourth decade of the twentieth century. At that time the drawing was torn and the records of burials made it difficult to determine the location of graves. As a result, a new plot of all the cemeteries was prepared by the writer, "not exactly according to scale" but measurements were accurate; it proved helpful in locating graves.

The following names of persons buried on the "Old Dutch" and





the "Old" cemeteries are listed below. A few are missing because some broken stones were discarded when the tombstones were re-set in the north-south lines referred to. There is a list for each of the cemeteries mentioned. In both lists Line No. 1 gives the name of persons buried along the west side of the cemetery, beginning with the first stone at the south side. In each of the two cemeteries mentioned, the numbers assigned rows correspond to the actual number of the row. The "in" attached to a name indicates feminine gender; e.g., Henrichin (Henry). The question mark means that the name was not decipherable, or questioned.

### OLD DUTCH CEMETERY

No. 1	Mary Tucker
Jacob F. Lillich	Mary Ann Gitt
Henry Lawver	Mary Gitt
Mary Kepner	Lewis Rosenmiller
Christina Thompson	Susan R. Null
George A. Noll	Elizabeth Reinhardt
Mary Wolf	Benjamin Fahnestock
Juliana Null	Catherine Henrichin
Sarah Null	Stone
Tobias Null	Stone
John Fox	No. 2
Elizabeth Hains	John M. Dosh
Jacob Berlin	Henry Carpenter
Jesse Kepner	Anna Barbara ?
Peter Ickes	Stone
Catherine B. Kepner	Elizabeth Haeffer
Doratha Ickes	Stone
Samuel Ickes	Stone
Henrich Ickes	? Abbey
Charles Ickes	? Abbey
Jona Noll	? Abbey
Jona D. Laugh	Mary Ann Abbey
Elizabeth E. Tucker	Jacob Ketterer
Thomas Tucker	John H. Martzloff
Mary Tucker	Stone
Tempest Tucker	



Stone  
William Gise  
Catherine Baugher  
George Baugher  
Christine Gertner  
Lewis Berlin  
Stone  
John Wolf, Sr.  
Stone  
Nancy Gise  
Frederick Sheet ?  
Elizabeth Henry  
Jesse Nagel  
Anna Bates ?  
William Fahnestock  
Caroline Rosenmiller  
Levi Henry  
Susanna Spengler  
Christina Spangler  
Stone  
Stone  
Sara Henrichin  
Lita Henrichin  
Mary Amelia Henry  
Matilda Henrichin  
Stone  
Stone

## No. 3

Anna Maria Lillich  
Nicholas Henry  
Rebecca Dosh  
William Dosh  
Henrietta Dosh  
Emily Miller  
Sebastian Hafer  
Susanna Hafer  
Mary Flickinger  
John Wolf

John Wolf  
John A. Wolf  
Susanna Wolf  
George Wolf  
Johannis Berlin  
George Henry  
William Momgyer  
Stone  
Dorothy Grafe  
Stone  
Stone  
Sarah Bell  
John Abbott  
William Taggart  
Hans Taggart  
Elizabeth Dick  
Philip Hallar  
Christian Dick  
C. Dick  
Jona Stover  
George Bardt  
Mary Bardt  
Stone  
Susan Bardt  
Magdaline Bardt

## No. 4

Henry Slagle  
Christian Slagle  
Peter Markle  
Jacob Markle  
George Ickes  
Susanna Ickes  
Mary Ickes  
James Ickes  
Stone  
Sebastian Finck  
Stone  
Stone





Stone ?  
 Susanna Haar  
 Isabella Haar  
 John George Baugher  
 Frederick Geiger  
 John Frederick Baugher  
 Anna C. Baugher  
 J. George Baugher  
 Eliza Baugher  
 David Harman

Susana Dehart  
 Maria M. Cregerin  
 John A. Grasser  
 Madeline Haberstock  
 Andrew Haverstock  
 Barbara Haverstock  
 Philip Haverstock  
 John Stock  
 C. Stock  
 S. Riemanin  
 M. Stock

## No. 5

George Metzger  
 Jacob Haines  
 Edward Haines  
 Mary Amelia Metzger  
 Joseph W. Scheurer  
 Catherine Stevens  
 Amelia Carl  
 Joseph B. Carl  
 John D. Hollinger  
 Infant D & M"  
 Rebecca Flieger  
 Cassandra Vogelsang  
 Theodore Vogelsang  
 Daniel Geiselman  
 Samuel Geiselman  
 Margaret Geiselman  
 Henry Geiselman  
 Milton Geiselman  
 Magdalena Geiselman  
 Albert Bender  
 Margaret Bender  
 Jacob Bender  
 Sophia Bender

## No. 6

Anna Mary Davis  
 Elizabeth Davis  
 George Davis  
 Joseph Berlin  
 Christian Kepner  
 Nathaniel Trostel  
 Joseph Kepner  
 Tobias Kepner  
 Susanna Kepner  
 Nicholas Bittinger  
 Mary Harman  
 Joseph Bittinger  
 Christian Bittinger  
 Christian Duncan  
 Thomas Kepner  
 Stone  
 William Kepner  
 Jesse Kepner  
 Emma J. Grant  
 ? Grant  
 John Gusler  
 Eva Getz



OLD CEMETERY (Rear of Church, Lot No. 73)

Row No. 1

George Hollinger  
Leah Grafe  
Tempest Wilson  
Anna Mary Wilson  
Sarah Wilson  
Frances Wilson  
Henry Grafe  
Mary E. Martin  
Martha Berkheimer  
Mary A. Myers  
John Stansbury  
Charles Connor  
Ida Goodenberger  
John Anthony  
Elizabeth Grove  
Eliza Householder  
Sarah Baltzley  
Stone

Row No. 2

Levi Kepner  
Mary H. Kepner  
Joseph Kepner  
Mary Henry  
Margaret Dosh  
George Dosh  
Henry Marshall  
Mary A. Marshall  
Clayton Marshall  
John L. Marshall  
Jonas Henry  
Rosanna Henry  
Jonas H. King  
Conrad Henry  
Michael Miller  
Catherine Miller

Jacob Miller  
John Nagle  
Sara Goodenberger  
Jacob Nagel  
Augustus Powers  
Lewis Kesselring  
Sara Kesselring

Row No. 3

George Gabel  
Mary Metzger  
Samuel Metzger  
Peter Miller  
Henry Stock  
Elizabeth Stock  
Henry S. Metzger  
Mary Miller  
Daniel Lillich  
Asaph Abbey  
Anna M. Abbey  
Prudence Abbey  
Ella R. Gitt  
Mary W. Graff  
Joseph Graff  
Mary F. Graff  
Martha Graff  
John Richter  
Justina F. Richter  
Mary Bucher  
Elizabeth Ernst  
Jacob Grove

Row No. 4

John Lillich  
Christina Lillich  
Laura V. Jordy  
Eve H. Jordy





Emma L. Wolf  
 Anna Mary Wolf  
 Jacob Wolf  
 Eve Wolf  
 Sarah Wolf  
 Elizabeth Lillich  
 Jacob Lillich  
 Christina Lillich  
 David Griest  
 Mary Speck  
 Christiana Spangler  
 John Spangler  
 Ann Miller  
 George Miller  
 Jacob Miller

## Row No. 5

Joseph Gabel  
 Samuel Lillich  
 Louisa Lillich  
 Nancy Gitt  
 Henry Gitt  
 Leah Flieger  
 Theodore Flieger  
 John Flieger  
 Caroline Flieger  
 Jesse Haar  
 Lydia Haar  
 Washington Haar  
 Amelia Motter  
 George W. Motter  
 George Null  
 Anson Cipling  
 Daniel Cipling  
 Hower Sipling  
 Clara Berkheimer

## Row No. 6

Emily Fleming

Louisa Haines  
 William Haines  
 Rev. George Haines  
 Cornelius Wolf  
 Elizabeth Spink  
 Catherine Henry  
 Michael Henry  
 Magdalen Henry  
 Eliza Null  
 Susan Gitt Lahman  
 William Gitt  
 Alice Amelia Gitt  
 Olivia Haner  
 Joseph Stover

## Row No. 7

George Moul  
 Catherine Moul  
 Leah Wolf Emlet  
 Sarah Haverstock  
 Henry Haverstock  
 Levi Haverstock  
 Sarah Markle  
 Joseph Markle  
 Lucy Markle  
 Sophia Brown  
 Jacob Brown  
 Lovina C. Miller  
 Lewis Miller  
 Harriet Hess

## Row No. 8

Albert Seabright  
 Mary C. Seabright  
 George W. Seabright  
 Henry D. Gitt  
 Lilly V. Kepner  
 Samuel Kepner  
 Mary Haar



William H. Hoffman	Anna Markle
Prudence Hoffman	Charles Markle
Daniel Hoffman	Henry Markle
Ida Heilman	Amanda Strasbaugh
Barbara Heilman	Catherina Markle
Daniel Heilman	Hetty ? (Negro)

### CHURCH FINANCE

Shortly after the turn of the eighteenth century, and until the second church was built, financial accounts in the book referred to above were not kept as orderly as they had been during the last quarter of the preceding century. Settlements were made irregularly, sometimes at considerable intervals of time. Collectors of church money included George Henry, Jacob Oberlin, John Noll, Jacob Levensten, Sebastian Hefer, John Shank, Jacob Ernst, Peter Fox, Henry Gitt and George Baugher. As of May 22, 1824, a balance of \$20.89½ was reported in the church fund.

Beginning with the year 1832, the accounts include entries for subscriptions for the new church building. The slowness with which the money came in, however, forced the church committee to borrow \$250.00 from Conrad Moul on the 3rd of December, 1831. At the close of the year 1836, subscriptions for the new church totaled \$1,205.46. Whether or not, this figure represents the cost of the church building is not indicated by the account.

The following examples of two early "settlement accounts" may, in this connection, prove interesting: 1) Under date of April 2, 1847, settlement was made as follows: Income during the last year; Penny collections, \$70.79, and Subscription on Parsonage, \$98.85, Total \$169.64. Expenditures; Incidentals, \$31.25, Paid on church debt, \$103.85, Balance in treasury, \$34.54, Total, \$169.64. 2) Under date of Aug. 14, 1847, the Church Council met and sold the schoolhouse, after which settlement was made as follows: Bal. in treasury, \$34.54, Note on Schoolhouse, \$73.37½, Payment of subscriptions, \$47.58½, Total receipts, \$155.49. Paid John Wolf on note, \$155.49.

The income from contributions of church members was, until comparatively recent times, rather meager. For the most part, such contributions were used to pay the salary of the pastor. The latter





was regularly supplemented by donations in kind; i.e., hay and grain for the pastor's horse, and vegetables, meat, etc., for his table.

Beginning with 1848, the records of money contributed, show a range from \$47.20 to \$199.06; i.e., an average of approximately \$95 yearly. During the period cited; i.e., for a period of twenty-eight years, the balance in the church treasurer's hands was frequently quite small; sometimes a small sum was owing the treasurer. As an illustration of the scarcity of funds, the practice of taking collections at funerals (except from mourners) was authorized by action of Council in 1853. Frequent resort to borrowing was practiced for years. On June 11th, 1869, three notes totaling \$213.83 were paid together with interest. As of the same date, a note for \$118.90 was reported as still outstanding.

Salaries of pastors were small. Each congregation belonging to the parish paid its share based upon church membership. In 1850 the salary paid the pastor was \$400 per year; in 1854, the salary was raised from a previous \$450 to \$500; in 1861 it was raised to \$700. At that time sextons were paid \$12 to \$15 per year. In 1860, one of the deacons reported contributions ranging from 25c to \$5.00 for the year; the custom of contacting members for pastor's salary at the close of the year had been followed for many years.

Repairs on church properties always cost considerably from year to year. In 1854, \$100 was paid for a fence. There were frequent bills for repairing and painting, also. Congregations belonging to the parish paid sums yearly ranging from \$6.00 to \$12.50 for parsonage repairs. The records indicate that payments were in arrears most of the time.

On the 29th of March, 1872, an old note was paid and a new note given, Oct. 1, 1873, for \$202.32 to pay the pastor's salary and debt on the parsonage. It appears that this sum was owed by Lischey's Congregation, then a part of the parish. On the 26th of March, 1875, the Congregation owed \$322.39. Subscriptions covering the amount were pledged, but the total collected, as reported by the treasurer, David Hollinger, was only \$302.75; the remainder was reported as unpaid.

Soon after the close of the Civil War, and continuing to about the year 1938, the people of the United States lived through at least three major "depressions." Each time there was widespread unemployment, hence people generally had little money and churches suffered with them as a result of "hard times."



During the period cited, there was no appreciable increase in contributions to St. John church above those of pre-Civil War days. Financial records indicate especially during the depression years, that contributions often approximated only ten cents per member per Sunday, sometimes even less. Very few members gave as much as twenty-five dollars per year; some gave nothing to benevolence.

It would be uncharitable to condemn the members of St. John during the period referred to for not being liberal. Many members who were living during the depression years did not have the dollars to give. The few living members who experienced one or more of the depression years will verify the statement. Many were without employment for months at a time. When they did find work, wages were often less than a dollar per day. To be sure, the dollars then did buy from two and one half to three times more than they currently buy, but when dollars are scarce people cannot buy at any price.

During the last years of the "thirty" decades of the twentieth century St. John contributions began to show an upward trend. The increases from year to year were due to 1) the leadership of pastors, 2) a wider spread of knowledge about the aims, purposes and needs of the Christian church, 3) a more general acceptance on the part of church members of the concept of stewardship, and 4) the decided increases in the earnings of church members of all age groups.

The following figures reflect the progress made in meeting the current needs of St. John church at all levels during the last decade. The average receipts per year for the ten year period, 1949-1958, approximated, 1) for current expenses, \$6,285.00, and 2) for benevolence, \$5,166.00. The figures include monies received from the Sunday School and other auxiliary organizations for buildings and maintenance and for benevolence. A few of the earmarked contributions included CHEY, \$903.00; Gettysburg College, \$294.56; Lutheran World Action, \$6,748.75 (an average of \$675.00 per year); Susquehanna Appeal, \$2,070.00 (to date); West Penn Inner Mission, \$700.00.

Since 1956, St. John Lutheran Church has participated in three ULCA projects: 1) Evangelism, 2) Stewardship, 3) Sector. The plan recommended for each of these projects was adhered to by





the "visitors" who called upon church members. The first of the projects emphasized the reclaiming of lapsed members and the securing of new members. The second project emphasized the practice of setting aside regularly a part of one's income to help promote the activities of the church at home and abroad. Tithing, in principle, was emphasized but the percentage of the tithe was not stressed. The third project utilized the services of several committees: 1) to study the life of the congregation, 2) to determine the stewardship potential of its members, 3) to provide a suggested budget, and 4) to devise means for meeting the budget.

The functioning of all three projects helped increase the contributions of members of St. John. This statement is attested by statistics referring to the average yearly contribution during the last ten years.

The dissolution of the parish appears to have had little or no influence upon raising the money to finance St. John church. It necessitated paying the whole of the pastor's salary; it increased by one half the cost of maintaining the parsonage, and it added considerable sums to the cost of many other incidental expenses, formerly shared by the other member of the parish.

The operation expenses of the church plant within recent times have increased many times over what they were twenty years ago. It cost somewhat more than \$200.00 to heat the church building when the coal burning furnaces were still in use. Water rents were non-existent until recently. Electric lighting has added to the cost of illumination many times more than the cost of kerosene-burning lamps. This by way of contrast with conditions that once were.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

The American Sunday School Union was organized in 1824. Thereafter, the Sunday School movement spread rapidly. Schools were established in this and nearby communities as early as the middle of the nineteenth century. The first Sunday School in St. John Lutheran Church dates back to about the Civil War period.

Early records of the St. John Sunday School do not give much detail pertaining to the functioning of the school. Its officers and teachers were members of the church and their teaching harmonized with Lutheran doctrine and practices.

The writer has vivid recollections of the Lutheran Sunday



School beginning about the middle eighties of the nineteenth century. At that time Edward M. Wolf was superintendent. The order of service prepared for Sunday Schools of the Lutheran Church was followed. Classes were taught in the auditorium of the first brick building; underneath the balconies for the most part. Special occasions like Christmas were observed with elaborate decorations in greens and tinsel papers, and with lengthy programs featuring recitations and singing. Usually a platform, several feet high, was erected within the altar area in order that people might better see.

After the present church building was erected, the Sunday School no longer met in the church auditorium, a large ground-floor room having been provided for the purpose.

One of the services supplied by the Sunday School until recent times, was the establishment of a library of Christian literature. In a day when books were not as plentiful as they are in our times, a library of approximately 250 books provided worthwhile reading material, and many members of the School made use of the books. A system of checking books loaned was adopted and a minimum of books was lost. Interest in the type of reading supplied, declined about the beginning of the twentieth century and more recently the library was discontinued.

Superintendents, other officers and teachers of the School have done yeoman service in bringing to its "scholars" the gospel of God's saving grace in Jesus Christ. In the early days, boys and girls were rewarded for regular attendance with a small blue ticket about one by two inches in size; a Bible verse was printed on the ticket. After the required number of tickets was acquired, they were exchanged for a red ticket of the same size. Red tickets were exchangeable for small books, Testaments, or pictures of different sizes bearing appropriate Christian motifs. The distribution of tickets is still practised.

It was a regular practice to encourage the younger pupils to memorize verses of scripture for many years. Pupils recited them to their teachers and received one or another of the rewards referred to. A record dating back to the early nineties of the past century gives a total of approximately 2,000 verses memorized during the year by eight to ten different pupils. In the case of older pupils, teaching methods varied with the age of the group.





With the opening of the new century, many of the older practices were abandoned. A few of them include: 1) The older name for a Sunday School outing was changed from Celebration to Picnic. 2) The simple Christmas and Easter exercise of an earlier time was replaced with the cantata and the pantomime. The former was a prominent feature of the Christmas program for years; it was introduced during the pastorate of Rev. Clare whose children took an active interest in it. Some of the entertainment features referred to are still observed, a notable exception being the distribution of gifts to children by a Santa Claus; others continue but with marked changes in spirit. 3) School consciousness began to give way to "class" consciousness when Sunday School classes began to organize. 4) The organization structure of the School approximated increasingly that of the public school. 5) The moving picture has replaced the old movable blackboard as a means of helping visualize Bible geography, history and social life.

One of the Celebrations referred to was held in a wood bordering the western end of the borough line. The whole Sunday School marched two abreast to the wood. A swing made by tying both ends of a long rope to the limb of a high tree furnished entertainment for children. Each family provided its own lunch; it was spread on a cloth laid on the ground, and was eaten by the family seated about the improvised table. During the afternoon there was a song service and an address. At sunset people began returning to their homes.

As means of transportation became more common, picnics, as they were then called, were held at more distant places. On one occasion, the picnic was held at Hunter's Run; the East Berlin Branch R. R., transported the picnickers. On another occasion, the school went by train to the East Berlin picnic ground. When automobiles began to multiply, a picnic was held at Boiling Springs. Most of the picnics were held in nearby woods. For many years refreshments were sold to picnickers to help meet expenses; more recently children were given ice cream, candy or soft drinks. Currently committees plan for games, and the dinner, served gratis. A collection is lifted to help meet expenses.

Observances of special seasons of the Church year have not changed very much. However, the very early days knew nothing about Cantatas. Children's Days, Mother's Days and Rally Days.



On each of the days mentioned, a program featuring its purpose was rendered, members of the school participating in the exercises.

The organized-class movement originated in the twentieth century. At that time, only men of the Sunday School joined the organization. They did not function locally, except to enlarge the membership; not as the Brotherhood once did. Within recent years there have been four organized classes of women; each of them meet regularly and engage in worship or in fund raising activities of one type or another.

Within recent years, St. John Sunday School has made changes in its organizational structure and practices. Formerly, pupils were permitted to join classes with little or no objection on the part of the Sunday School officials. Currently, they are assigned to classes on the basis of chronological age; promoted, when they have spent the time required for their age group; and issued a certificate of promotion, when assigned to another group. The practices followed are similar to current practices in public school systems.

During the last three or four decades of the twentieth century, Sunday School lesson helps and teaching methods have been influenced by what has been happening within the same areas in public education. Current lesson helps reflect the theories of so-called modern education in public schools. The visual education concept is responsible for illustrated lessons helps and for silent and/or sound moving pictures. St. John has had standard visual education equipment for five or more years. Even Sunday School methods of teaching have been influenced by public school techniques; notwithstanding, the "lecture" method and a minimum of participation by pupils are still characteristic features of Sunday School teaching in St. John adult department as they are in many other Schools.

The following report of the Sunday School for the year Dec. 25, 1898, to Dec. 31, 1899, contrasts sharply with the current situation: Average number of teachers; male 3, female 6. Average number of "scholars"; male 36, female 40, total enrolled 85. Money collected \$92.23; missionary collections \$26.29; total \$118.52. Expenditures, \$75.19; balance \$43.33, of which \$3.71 remained in the missionary fund.

For the period beginning 1951 through 1958, the average yearly





offerings were \$1,556.50; the lowest being \$1,180.64 in 1951 and the highest, \$2,082.95 in 1958. In addition the offerings for special appeals average \$327.10; and for maintenance and a building fund, \$243.60. The average total receipts for the period, as shown by the audit were \$2,252.34, and the disbursements were \$2,217.40. These figures contrast very favorably with those for the last ten years of the 19th century. In reality, however, they are not as favorable as it appears, for the value of the dollar differed markedly during the two periods for which figures are given.

It appears that no records of the Sunday School prior to the year 1886 have been preserved; at least a search has not found any. Since 1886 the superintendents of the School include the following: Edward M. Wolf, 1886-1889; Samuel Duncan, 1890, 1892-1895, 1897; Israel Nagle, 1891; Robert D. Clare, 1895 (completed the Duncan term); Edward P. Miller, 1896, 1898-1905; Aaron Wolf, 1905 (completed the Miller term); Clayton B. Yohe, 1906-1934; Bruce Slaybaugh, 1935-1942; Willis W. Eisenhart, 1942 (completed the Slaybaugh term); George Meckley, 1943; Grace M. Smith, 1944-. Within recent years, one, two and three assistants to the superintendent have been elected at times.

Currently, the Youth Department of the Sunday School is housed in the Education Building. Its officers are a superintendent, and two assistants; there are ten teachers. The total enrollment approximates 175. There is a class for mothers who accompany children who are too young to join the beginners class.

The main Sunday School meets in the first-floor room of the church building. There are twelve classes of pupils; six for girls or women, taught by women, and five classes for boys and men, taught by men. The adult Bible class enrolls both men and women and numbers about thirty pupils. Two of the classes meet in the church parlor; one for boys, the other for girls.

The total number of Sunday School pupils enrolled in all departments approximates 400, and the average attendance per Sunday is sixty to seventy-five per cent of the enrollment.

#### AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CHURCH

Those known to have functioned for longer or shorter periods of time include 1) Ladies Aid Society, 2) Women's Missionary



Society, 3) Christian Endeavor Society, 4) Men's Brotherhood, and 6) Women of the Church.

The first Ladies Aid Society was organized, March 30, 1904, during the pastorate of Rev. R. H. Clare. There are two references to money which had been turned over to the Society and donated by them to maintenance of the church property; the money referred to may have been raised by women of the Church previously.

Since 1904, the Society has functioned without interruption. The following women have served in the three important offices of the Society. Presidents: Mrs. R. H. Clare, Mrs. T. C. Miller, Mrs. Harry Meckley, Mrs. William Emlet, Mrs. Paul Gladfelter, Mrs. Warren W. Hafer, Mrs. David Hoke, Mrs. Richard Hoke, and Mrs. Mabel Emig; Secretaries: Martha Berkheimer, Mrs. Charles Wolf, Laura Alwine, Mrs. Paul Wolf, Mrs. S. S. Stevens, Mrs. Paul Hoke, Mrs. W. J. Craumer, Mrs. Warren W. Hafer, Mrs. Faber Wildasin, and Mrs. Ernest Hoke; Treasurers: Mrs. Lewis Jordy, Mrs. T. C. Miller, Mrs. Frederick Sternat, Mrs. M. L. Slothour, Mrs. Paul Wolf, and Mrs. George Lillich.

Membership in the Society was open to all female members of the Church. The total yearly members approximated fifty-five, more or less at times due to deaths and withdrawals caused by loss of interest or change of residence. Men held honorary membership at times; and "in Memoriam" membership was bestowed for faithful service.

During the first twenty years of its functioning, meetings of the Society were frequently held in the homes of members. Items of business included maintenance of membership, payment of dues, planning for projects to raise funds and details involved in executing them. Monies raised were used to finance projects adopted, a few of which included bedding for Tressler Orphan Home; planting shade trees "in front of the church" building; maintenance of the parsonage and sexton house; and furnishing carpet for the church auditorium. An approximate sum of \$1,000.00 was appropriated to pay for the projects mentioned.

In 1914, during the pastorate of Rev. Sternat, the Society sought the permission of church council to purchase the Trimmer property on lot No. 71, and convert it into a Guild House. Council agreed provided the necessary repairs, upkeep, taxes, etc., were





met by the Society; its proposal was accepted, Nov. 4, 1914, and a down payment of \$225 was made Mar. 30, 1915. It was agreed by the owner of the property to receive "at a future date convenient to the Society" the remaining \$100 still owing him.

Several hundred dollars were spent for repairs and necessary changes to meet the Society's purposes. The money needed to pay for the improvements made was earned by the Society women between the years 1915 and 1925; it was the total of net profits on sales of one kind or another and on strawberry-ice cream festivals, oyster suppers and full course dinners.

The Guild House appears to have failed to meet the demands made upon it, hence the Society decided to tear it down and build a Parish House upon its site. On the 30th of July, 1925, a building committee consisting of five members of the Society and one member of the church council was put in charge of the project. In an incredibly short time, large sums of money were raised to finance the building and its equipment. One concession at the Hanover Fair netted a profit of \$328.49. Other concessions at Farmer's Picnic, north of Abbottstown, raised equally large sums of money. By July 12, 1926, the committee was discharged and monies totaling approximately \$2,500.00 had been raised to pay for the Parish House.

Since 1929 membership in the Society and its method of functioning has remained fairly constant. Meetings were held in the Parish House, but those in attendance rarely averaged fifty per cent of the total membership. Within recent times, however, extensive repairs and improvements have been made to the Parish House. They include plastering and calcimining the walls, an addition to the House at its north end which houses a modern kitchen with appliances, repainting the outside and re-roofing the building, installing a gas heating plant and inside toilets, providing chairs, tables and dishes needed to serve dinners and banquets, and refinishing floors and repainting woodwork inside. The money needed to finance these improvements totaled at least \$7,500.00

In addition to the money spent upon operation and maintenance, sums of money were donated from year to year to the local church and to the benevolent interests of ULCA. Locally, \$5,750.00 was given to help liquidate building indebtedness, and \$540.00 for parsonage and cemetery maintenance. The total money raised by



the Society since 1925 approximated \$38,000.00 or about an average of \$1,200.00 yearly. Disbursements approximated \$37,500.00. The faithfulness and devotion of St. John women over more than a half century of the church's history must be apparent to the thoughtful reader.

### WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

There were only four women of the Congregation present at the organizational meeting of the Woman's Missionary Society, Oct. 21, 1917. One of the women was Mrs. Frederick Sternat, wife of the pastor then ministering to St. John Congregation. The Society's first president was Mrs. Sternat. At a meeting, held in April, 1918, Estella Hale was elected secretary and Mrs. William Emlet treasurer.

The constitution of the Society lists certain aims and provides for the payment of dues to meet its financial obligations locally, and at conference and synodical levels of the Church. The record books of the Society reveal 1) that monthly meetings were held regularly since its organization, 2) that programs were regularly planned to realize constitutional aims, and 3) that there was steady growth in membership and encouraging increases, from time to time, in the number of members attending monthly meetings of the Society. In 1925 the total membership of the Society was fifty-eight.

There were only two presidents of the Society during the first twenty years of its functioning. Mrs. Paul Gladfelter succeeded Mrs. Sternat during the year 1920. Estella Hale served as secretary until the year 1942. Pastors Sternat and Gladfelter were regular attendants at the Society's meetings; both spoke frequently on important phases of missionary work.

The Society sent delegates to Conference and Synod meetings regularly and contributed toward the support of projects adopted by both. Records of the Society reveal that money was donated to Tressler Orphan Home; that suitable clothing was made and sent to institutions that care for children and educate them. Most of the money for these donations was secured from dues and voluntary gifts of members, or from collections lifted at special missionary services to which church members were invited. During the first twenty-five years of the Society's history at least \$3,000.00





was disbursed. From 1933 to 1942, \$412.00 was raised for the general fund; \$693.00, for special projects and objectives, and \$349.00 for Thank Offerings. In the year 1947, the income reported was \$345.90 and the disbursements were \$243.80.

The Society met monthly in the homes of members or in the Sunday School rooms of the church building. The programs featured singing, prayer, Bible reading and the discussion of topics relating to world-wide missionary activity as suggested in synodical and ULCA publications. Most of the active members took parts on the program. Thank Offering meetings were held annually, often in connection with a regular worship church service. On ten different occasions either retired missionaries or those home on furlough, brought the main message.

The Society frequently joined with Trinity Church members at East Berlin in an observance of the Week of Prayer; sometimes, the Abbottstown Reformed Church women joined St. John women in conducting the Week of Prayer service. On occasion, St. John and Trinity joined for the monthly worship and study meeting.

The Silver Anniversary of the Society was celebrated during the pastorate of Rev. H. Snyder Alleman. Thirty-nine members of the Society were active in helping to make the anniversary a success. Rev. Alleman spent much time planning for and assisting in preparing a suitable program. The program states that there were then twelve life members of the Society.

Officers who served the Society since its organization include, in addition to those mentioned above, Presidents: Mrs. Harry Meckley, Mrs. Ernest Hoke, Miss Anna Emig, Miss Elsie Eisenhart; Secretaries: Estella H. Altland, Ruth Diller Baker, Anna Emig Sanders, Mrs. Paul Lookingbill; Treasurers: Mrs. Paul Wolf, Mrs. Margie R. Hoke.

The ten-year period covered by the pastorate of Rev. L. J. Karschner witnessed progress in achieving the more recent goals of ULCA missionary activity. Mission studies enlarged the vision of members, stimulated zeal to work, and increased effort to evangelize the unsaved at home and in other lands.

During the decade referred to, members of the local Society assumed increasing responsibility for achieving the objectives of the ULCA Missionary Society. Each year literature dealing with the missionary movement of the Church at conference, synodical and



national levels was studied. Members, acting as discussion leaders studied assignments, presented abstracts of them, and led the discussion to insure clearer understanding. Initiative was assumed in deciding upon projects adopted. Thank offering services were arranged for yearly and speakers who were active in the missionary work of the Church were secured to speak at a regularly scheduled worship service. The offerings received at such services were added to dues and voluntary offerings paid by members of the Society and were used in meeting all the financial obligations of the Society, many of which were then referred to as "Special Aids." During Rev. Karschner's pastorate, the local Society entertained the West Penn Missionary Conference, 1953.

A Young Women's Missionary Society was organized in June, 1923, with a membership of eleven. The aims and purposes of the Society were similar to those of the senior organization and it functioned in much the same way. On occasion it met with the senior society, especially for Week of Prayer and Thank Offering services.

The officers who served during the eighteen years it functioned include Estella M. Hale, Vivian Stambaugh, Sara Kraber, Miriam Mummert, Delta Hoke, Verna Lillich, and Florence Seim Hoke (as presidents); Secretaries: Mary Jane Hafer, Nora Haar, Zora Slaybaugh, Marguerite Gladfelter, Anna Emig, Sylvia Craumer; Treasurers: Delta Harman, Edyth Slaybaugh, Esther Hoke, Estella Hale, Mabel Emig, Florence Seim, Hazel Wisler, and Maxine Hamme.

There are only four financial records in the minute books of the society; they cover the years 1931 through 1939. The total income for the years cited was \$443.73; and the total disbursements were \$293.48. The highest membership was twenty-three, with an average for the years 1923-29 of nineteen. Figures for attendance range from four to eighteen for the years given, with an average of approximately ten.

The Light Brigade was a Junior Missionary Society; it was organized Dec. 21, 1920, with eight children present at the meeting. In 1921 there were thirty-five members. Mrs. Estella Altland, Mrs. George Metzger and Marguerite Gladfelter had charge of the Brigade. The purpose of the organization was to train members by participating in the society's activities for future leadership.





Women of St. John congregation have been interested for more than a decade in the National Lutheran Home for the Aged (Washington, D. C.) and in Gettysburg Theological Seminary. They hold membership in the Women's Auxiliary of the Home since 1946. Local memberships have increased yearly until 1959 when St. John had a total of fifty-five. Miss Elsie Eisenhart is the Key Woman for St. John congregation. Women of St. John also held membership in the Auxiliary of the Seminary for five years; the Key Woman was Mrs. Ruth Myers who recently transferred to a nearby Lutheran Church.

A Christian Endeavor Society of St. John Church was formed soon after the national organization was established. Rev. Richard H. Clare assisted the young people of the Church in organizing the Society. Its purpose was to promote Christian living in daily life. The national organization furnished helpful literature and guidance for the weekly meeting of the Society which was held on a Sunday evening immediately before the regular church service. Members of the Society took turns in conducting the service which featured singing, scripture reading, a short talk on the topic assigned and prayer.

The first officers were elected Nov. 27, 1892, and served until June 11, 1893. They were Edward P. Miller, President; Mary Spangler, Vice President; Emma Lillich, Secretary; and Samuel H. Duncan, Treasurer. Thirty-three members constituted the initial group. Rev. Henry Clare assisted in organizing the Society. The Society functioned regularly until the early years of the twentieth century when it disbanded.

The Luther League was organized in 1939 during the pastorate of Rev. John Strevig. Its membership has since approximated thirty young people of both sexes. Miss Grace Smith was its first president; she served continuously in the office for the first five years. The League is indebted to her for devoted leadership ever since it was organized. She guided its activities, helped train its members for official positions in the local league and at the York Conference level. Recently she organized a Junior Luther League, a number of whose members have already become active in the senior league. The Luther League has been actively interested in projects that benefit the Church. Eight hundred dollars have been donated to the local church to help defray the cost of building



projects, bulletin boards have been procured and placed on church property, the devotional booklet, "Light for Today," is supplied interested church members gratis, and the half cost of a motion picture projector was donated to the Sunday School. One of the sources of the League's income is a periodic waste-paper collection and sale. Many Leaguers have become teachers in the Sunday School and members of the Church Council. Others have assisted in the Evangelism and the Sector projects of the local church.

The Lutheran Brotherhood was organized during the pastorate of Rev. John Strevig, Mar. 16, 1939; the initial membership was ten. Officers elected were Norman Miller, President; Earl Rodgers, Vice President; Richard Hoke, Secretary; and George Lillich, Treasurer. Meetings were held each month on the last Thursday night of the month, except July and August.

The Brotherhood functioned regularly between September, 1941, and August 1942. A constitution was adopted and the local organization later affiliated with the ULCA Brotherhood during the year 1941. The minutes of the Brotherhood during the period referred to indicate that its aims and purposes were realized. The worship service was observed; the programs proposed by the national organization were followed, local and imported speakers spoke on the subjects suggested, and projects were carried through to successful completion. During the pastorate of Rev. Strevig the Brotherhood accepted responsibility for a regular congregational service, held Oct. 20, 1940.

As of September, 1942, the total membership of the Brotherhood was twenty-seven. Two to three month vacations during the summer season, together with other legitimate interests of members, kept percentages of attendance low during certain months of the approximate two-year-and-ten-month period of its functioning. The last recorded meeting of the Brotherhood was held in November, 1942.

### ST. JOHN UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN

United Lutheran Church Women is the title of an organization created by the ULCA in 1956. Its purpose is to unite all women's organizations in local churches into one functioning group, working through Conferences, Synods, and the ULCA organizations.





Local groups of women were asked to disband and enter the Women of the Church organization.

An important feature of the plan provides that the total woman membership of the local church form into groups each representing a major activity of church women, and that the group membership rotate annually throughout the year, thus making it possible for all church women to become better acquainted with one another and more interested in all activities of church women.

Representatives of St. John women met with Rev. Karschner, Mar. 24, 1957, to form a local organization of ULCW. The plan adopted set up four committees; viz., Membership; Education; Christian Service, and Offerings. Five organized adult groups that had been functioning were constituted as Circles; viz., Woman's Missionary Society, and four organized adult women's Sunday School Classes whose names were not changed (Refuge, Sunshine Sisters, Volunteers, and Willing Workers). The Circle name of the Women's Missionary Society is Mission Study.

The following officers were elected: Miss Grace Smith, President; Mrs. Lester Hoffheins, Secretary; Miss Elsie Eisenhart, Treasurer. Committee Chairwomen: Mrs. L. J. Karschner, Mrs. Charles Smith, Mrs. Morell Meyers, and Mrs. Jack Housman (see order in above paragraph). At the April 13, 1957, meeting, the personnel of the organization was changed as follows: Mrs. Pauline Wildasin, Secretary; Janet Pagel, Education; Mrs. Lester Hoffheins, Christian Service; Mrs. Jean Shultz, Offerings.

The officers of St. John ULCW, together with the Committee Chairwomen and four members representing each Circle form the Executive Committee which transacts all business and determines the policies of the local ULCW. The council meets frequently during the year at the call of the president.

The local ULCW has been functioning for approximately three years. Each of the committees plans activities to realize the overall objectives of the ULCW suggested in the monthly publication of "Lutheran Woman's Work," the official publication of ULCW. The appropriate committees have reported donations to the Leprosy Colony, the Dorcas Plan, Homes for the Aged and the Crippled, and the West Penn Inner Mission. Suggested books have been read, studied and reported upon by committee members,



and sick and aged members of the church have been visited by other committee members.

The yearly budget adopted has shown slight increases during the last two years; for the 1958-59 year, it totaled \$255.00. Since organizing the local ULCW, approximately \$627.50 has been raised for Thank Offerings and other budgeted obligations.

### CHURCH RECORD BOOKS

The financial record book, donated by Nicholas Bittinger, was no doubt the first of a large number of books since purchased by church authorities. Record books of the church are rich sources of information and they should be zealously guarded. The writer of this history regrets the loss of the first church records at the time the first church building burned in 1829. As a result of its burning, tradition says that records pertaining to the membership of the first congregation, the date of its organization, the type of building in which it worshiped, the frequency of its worship services, the names of church members, lists of communicants, marriages, births of children, and deaths of members—all except a few of the latter items which may be learned from tombstone inscriptions on the Old Dutch Cemetery, are mere matters for conjecture; even the traditions of the first church were forgotten by people belonging to the fourth and fifth generations after the time of Rev. J. George Baugher.

After the second church was built in 1830, original recordings of births, baptisms, marriages and deaths of members of the congregation were entered in books by pastors then serving the congregation. There are pages in some of the books, however, which are blank. It is probable that some pastors delayed making entries with the result that they were never entered. On the whole, most of the early pastors were faithful and meticulous in making entries.

There are minute books of the Church Councils since 1830. Sometimes the entries are brief, due no doubt to infrequent meetings and little other than routine business. Later minute books contain more detailed information about matters that claimed the attention of Council. From still later Minute Books it is possible to get the names of members, candidates for election to Council, facts pertaining to the care of the church properties, including the cemeteries, and at times action taken concerning legalizing pro-





posed council action. Recordings in more recent minute books are more detailed and more easily interpreted.

During the last hundred years St. John record books contain information about 1) families belonging to the Church, 2) personnel of church officials, and 3) action taken to promote the welfare of the Congregation and to provide for its efficient functioning.

All of the above books referred to, together with books pertaining to the Sunday School and the auxiliary organizations of the Church, are kept in a safe in the parsonage.

An inventory of the record books kept in the parsonage safe was taken June 9, 1948; it included the following: 1) Church Council Records, 2) Records of Ministerial Acts, 3) Synodical Reports, 4) Sunday School Records, 5) Missionary Society Records, 6) Young People's Society Records, and 7) Transfer Record Books.

The first records listed include financial records and council meeting records. The former include 1) The Nicholas Bittinger book, 1770-1836, 2) Eleven books covering the years between 1866 and 1946, 3) Two books without dates, 4) One book containing data re the church building erected in 1889, and 5) Bittinger, William & Eliza, fund book, 1894-1945; and the latter, the Minute Books of Council from 1851 to 1942 and one Parish Joint Council Minute Book, 1878-1898.

The records of ministerial acts include 1) Two communicant record books, 1836-1848, and 1867-1880, 2) Two ministerial record books, 1843 and 1884, 3) A record book giving baptisms, 1837-1850; membership, 1860; marriages, 1841-1850; deaths, 1838-1850; New Oxford members, 1851, 4) A record book begun by Pastor Gladfelter in 1927 with entries to June, 1960, containing the following: a. Councilmen, Accessions and Transfers, 1941-1960; b. Communicants, 1927-1960; c. Baptisms, 1920-1960, adult baptisms, 1922-1960; d. Deaths, funerals, 1920-1960; e. Marriages, 1920-1960; f. Guest ministers and Visitors, 1941-1960.

The synodical reports pertain to finances and other matters.

The Sunday School records include minute books for 1875-1892; 1890-1895; 1895-1906; 1907-1928.

The missionary society records include 1) Four books covering the years: 1918-1925; 1923-1930; 1926-1931; 1931-1939, and one Young Woman's Missionary Society book, 1925-1941.



The young people's society records include 1) Two Christian Endeavor Books covering 1894-1898 and 1892-1895; 2) One Luther League Book, 1939-1940.

The transfer records include 1) Two (stubs) 1943-47; 2) One, 1948, not filled.

### FOUNDER'S DAYS

During early colonial days, the Proprietary of Pennsylvania often donated land to church organizations if they agreed to build a house of worship on it. The custom was sometimes observed by well-to-do immigrants who had received large grants of land from the Penns. In both cases, the purpose was to attract desirable settlers to locate upon the grantor's land.

One such immigrant was an Englishman bearing the name, John Abbott. He had come to America in 1735; had settled upon land marking the present site of Abbottstown; had acquired a Penn warrant for it in 1744, and had received a clear title to the 506-acre tract surrounding Abbottstown in 1763.

Abbott "laid out" his town in 1753, but it was not until May 28, 1770, that he deeded two lots to the officials of a Congregation of Lutherans who had organized about ten years earlier. His deed stipulated that the two lots were granted for the consideration of five shillings (the customary dollar-down payment to legalize the transfer) and a further payment to him and his heirs of one pepper corn forever, if lawfully demanded on the first day of May of every year (another customary device "to attach a string" to the transfer; certainly not to profit financially, since one pepper corn, intrinsically, has no value; moreover its payment was never demanded either by Abbott or his immediate heirs). From another point of view, it was probably intended to take the place of the "quit-rent" fee exacted yearly from every lot owner. A pepper corn is the dried seed of the pepper plant.

There is no church record, covering a period of one hundred seventy-six years, that St. John Congregation ever paid the pepper corn; nor is there any record that its payment was ever demanded.

Founder's Day was observed for the first time in the history of St. John Lutheran Congregation on the 5th of May, 1946. It required a little urging on the part of Rev. H. Snyder Alleman, who was then pastor, to inaugurate such an observance; however, the





membership of the church joined enthusiastically in the celebration.

The program featured congregational singing; special vocal and instrumental music; a memorial address on "The Church's Heritage" by Rev. Norman S. Wolf, D.D., a ministerial son of the congregation; two historical addresses, and the payment of the pepper corn to Mrs. Virginia Wolf Ziegler, a descendant of Catherine Abbott Carns who was a granddaughter of John Abbott.

The following year, 1947, a second Founder's Day was observed; Its program was similar to that of the first observance. The pepper corn was paid to Frank Carns, a descendant of Catherine Abbott Carns who was a granddaughter of John Abbott.

The third Founder's Day was not observed until Sunday, August 30, 1953. It was one of the scheduled events of the Abbottstown Bicentennial, and was again held in the auditorium of St. John Church. On that occasion, pepper corns were paid to approximately ten Abbott descendants who were present; among them John Abbott Walls, a lineal descendant (sixth Abbott generation), who spoke briefly about his descent through John Abbott's daughters, Catherine and Margaret. The church service was similar to that observed on former occasions. The invited guest speaker was Rev. Harvey D. Hoover, D.D., a ministerial son of the Church; at that time a professor in the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg.

Founder's Day will be observed the fourth time in connection with the bicentennial of the organization of St. John Congregation. The program for that occasion will also include the payment of a pepper corn to all descendants of John Abbott present. However, the program will feature the two hundredth anniversary of St. John's founding with appropriate music, an address by an invited guest speaker, and some reference to her influence upon the local community and her contribution to the church at large.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer of this history has been associated with St. John Church, more or less closely, for the major part of the "four score years" of his life. He was a pupil in its Sunday School during boyhood years, and one of its teachers for more than twenty-five years of his adolescent and adult life. He was catechized, baptized and confirmed by one of its pastors. Since re-establishing



St. John as his church home in 1939, he has been privileged to serve her in many ways; one of the most treasured being as the writer of the first two hundred years of her history.

The thoughtful reader of this history will no doubt be impressed with the constantly expanding activities of St. John Church. To be sure, there were times when progress was slowed, but St. John always had consecrated pastors and devoted laymen and laywomen to counsel and to guide in times of inactivity. As a result, the overall impression gained from a study of her long history is one of orderly progressive development in realizing the task assigned Christ's Church Militant—to make, to baptize and to teach disciples, who in their observance of what He commanded, experience His constant presence in their lives.

Whatever of success St. John has enjoyed in her efforts to realize the goal set by the Founder of the Christian Church, is attributable to the influence of the Holy Spirit operative in the hearts of St. John's members across the two hundred years of her history. No one period of her own history; no one generation of her membership; no one person or group of persons, may be rightly credited for what has been achieved. The sum total of the worthwhile contributions of successive generations of a church's membership is passed on; even so, the praise and the glory belong to the work of the Holy Spirit, the Founder's promised Counselor and Comforter.





A BRIEF HISTORY OF  
ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ABBOTTSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

BY

WILLIS W. EISENHART

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